THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 50

FIFTIETH ISSUE EXTRAVAGANZA!

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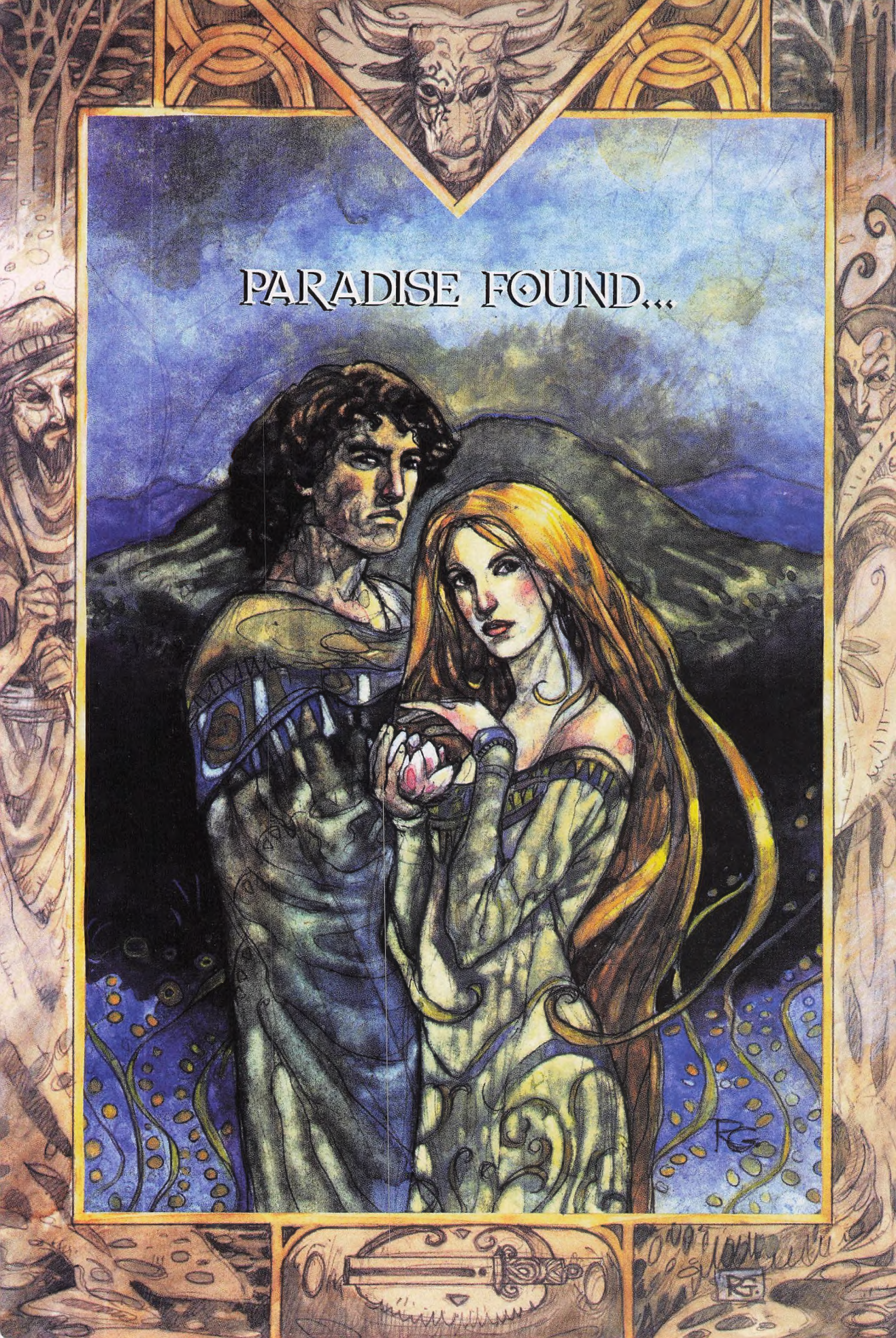
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WIZARD®

Number 50
OCTOBER 1995

CONTENTS

features
corn beef on rye

46 TIME TO WORK
Former X-Men artist Paul Smith spills the beans on how he kinda screwed up his career and just where he's been all these years. By Craig Shutt

54 THE MANY FACES OF TODD
Spend the day with Todd McFarlane the artist. And Todd the businessman. And Todd the bustier collector. By Craig Shutt

up close
tuna in a pocket

34 GONE BUGGY
Tick creator Ben Edlund talks about bringing his wacky blue superhero to Saturday morning TV. By Marc Shapiro

40 CASTING CALL 8
It's that freakish hellspawn's turn to hit the big screen, as we cast the Spawn movie. By the devilish Wizard staff

44 FIRST LOOK
Get a sneak-peek at the all-new Red Sonja...without her chain mail bikini, dammit! By Craig Shutt

special anniversary stuff
blt

74 WIZARD EXPOSED
At long last, the secret origin of Wizard is revealed, as we chronicle our growth from infancy to now. By Pat McCallum

82 WE KNEW 'EM WHEN
Profiling a handful of creators who have risen to prominence over the past few years. By Marc Shapiro

95 BEHIND THE CURTAIN
Take a guided tour through the Wizard offices and get to know all of the freaks who work 'round these parts. By Jim McLauchlin

106 FIGURE THIS
A statistical analysis of some key elements from the first 49 issues of Wizard. By Marc "My Brain is Fried" Wilkofsky

108 CHEESE WHIZ
You've seen his goofy head all over the place in this mag, now learn how Publisher Gareb Shamus started Wizard. By former X-Men scribe Fabian Nicieza

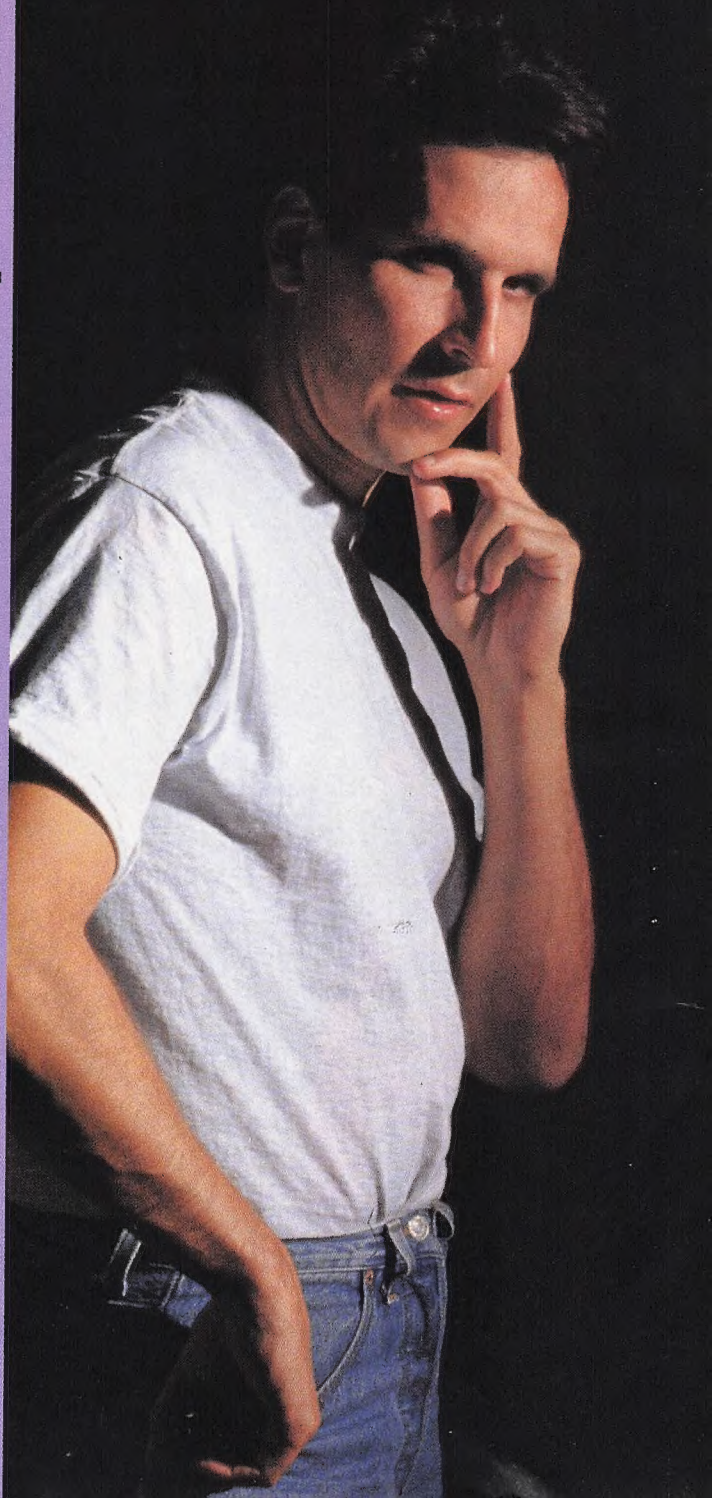
exclusive offer
a big bowl of white rice

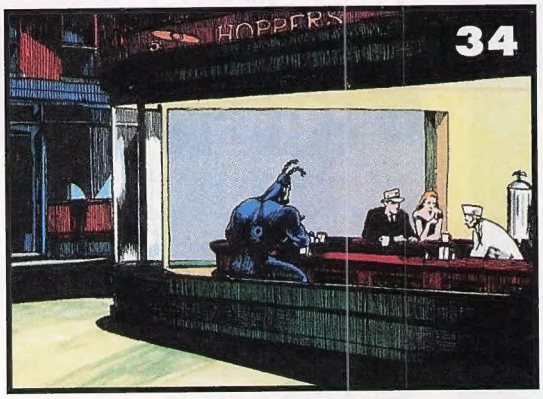
128 GET OVERPOWERED!
Get yer hands on a Wizard Press Exclusive! This month we're offerin' you a Marvel OverPower Metal Print featuring Storm vs. The Thing! Lose that ratty ol' Dukes of Hazzard poster on yer wall, this baby's got it beat! Page 128!

WIN!
YOUR VERY OWN TODD MCFARLANE!

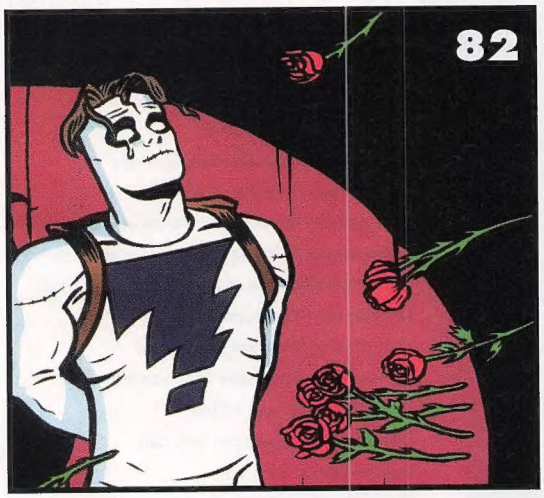
Well, no. We can't actually give him away (What would his wife think?), but we can get ya the next best thing: an entire day with the big guy. So move it to page 72!

PHOTO: Jim McHugh





Robert Beck



LOOK!

SEEK, AND YE SHALL WIN!

It's back! The annual Wizard *Scavenger Hunt is better than ever! Find page 101.*

departments

the usual, mabel

	PAGE
MAGIC WORDS	8
WIZARD NEWS	19
THE DRAWING BOARD	62
HOMEMADE HEROES	70
C.B.I.Q.	130
TOP 10 COMICS	132
COMIC WATCH/GOOD & CHEAP	137
PICKS	138
TOP 100	160
INTRO TO THE PRICE GUIDE	161
CREATOR ABBREVIATIONS	164
COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE	166
CARD PRICE GUIDE	217
PHOTO GALLERY	222
SHOWS & CONVENTIONS	225
JUNK DRAWER *(Hey, lookie—a new department!)*	234
BULLPEN	238
WIZARD PROFILE	240

columns

just coffee, thanks

FROM THE TOP	6
KRASH COURSE	66
MANGA SCENE	116
PALMER'S PICKS	120
POWER UP!	126
CARD MARKET	153
MARKET WATCH	156
E.G.O.	228
CUT & PRINT	230

contests

tomato sandwich with soup

TODD MCFARLANE 72
If you've got the right "background," you may be worthy of spending the whole day with Todd McFarlane.

CAPTAIN AMERICA 92
Here's your chance to have your own plot featured in a future Wizard *Captain America mini-comic!*

SCAVENGER HUNT 101
Go find a whole bunch o' crap and win yourself some much better crap, including a Sega Saturn game system!!

UNDERWORLD UNLEASHED 124
Find young Phil and win some awesome original Underworld *art and the new SkyBox Villains card set! It's so good to be bad.*

from the top

The New *Wizard*

When I think back to the early days of *Wizard*, when we were a staff of six or seven working out of my parents' house, it seems like it must've been a hundred years ago. We (Pat McCallum, Doug Goldstein and assorted family members) would sit around the kitchen table through the night going over new ideas for the magazine. We'd go over what hot news or gossip we had heard, the various ideas we had for improving *Wizard*, and then we'd plug in what we could do in the newest issue, and what had to wait for next ish. (Back in those days, we never really mapped out an issue; we just took whatever we thought would be cool that month, and made an issue out of it.)

If it wasn't for our love of comics (and my grandma's awe-inspiring grilled cheese sandwiches), I don't know how we would have lasted through those all-night jam sessions night after night. It's a lot different now. *Wizard* plans issues months in advance, meetings take place in massive offices behind closed doors, and my grandma now charges five bucks a pop for her sandwiches. (She figures we can afford to pay for 'em now.)

But even though we've grown into a successful company, we're still the same group of misfits we were back when we slapped *Wizard* #1 together. We may have some cooler toys to work with now, and it's easier working with the rest of the industry now that *Wizard*'s matured, but we haven't lost sight of what made us who we are.

We're comic fans, and we base *Wizard* not only on what you write in and tell us you'd like to see, but on what we'd like to read about as well. If we hear about something that gets us excited, and it looks to be a pretty cool deal, bam, it's in. The only real guideline we follow when creating an issue of *Wizard* is "Is it cool?" That's all we've ever really cared about. We haven't always been politically correct; we've done our fair share of irritating publishers by covering topics they'd rather sweep under the rug (as well as cracking jokes at their expense), but as long as we think the final product is cool, and you like the way it came out, we've done our job. Our main objective has been, and always will be, to be the fan's magazine.

With that goal in mind, we strived to be a better magazine with every issue. And while I think we've done a pretty darn good job with the mag so far, *Wizard* #50 not only sets a new standard of excellence that we will live up to, but it's also the dawning of a new age for us.

So thanks for standing with us, and welcome to *Wizard* #50.

Stay cool,

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. This issue's cover art, first used on *Wizard* #1, was recolored "Fleer-style" for our "anniversary" issue, and is also a card in Fleer's Marvel Over•Power card game included with this ish. Pretty cool, eh?

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OVER•POWER CARD GAME

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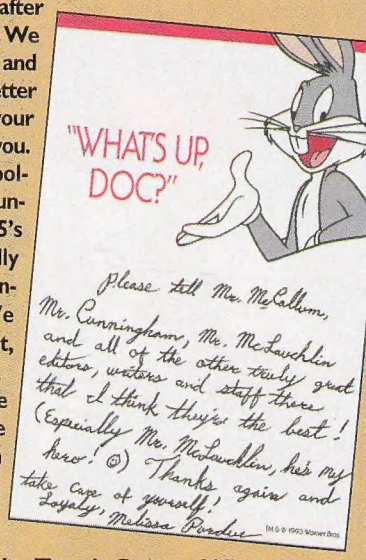
MAGIC WORDS

An Extra Page for More of the Crap You Love!

On that note, we'd like to take a second on this anniversary occasion to thank all the readers who take the time to write in month after month to let us know what kind of job we're doing. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for your guidance and encouragement. And hey, Melissa Purdue (see letter on right)—send us another letter and include your address. We've got something we'd like to send you.

Before we get down to business, a quick apology. Apparently we mislabeled many of the countries that all those foreign comics in *Wizard* #45's Price Guide came from. We did an especially bad job on comics from The Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Thailand and Cambodia. We apologize to all our international fans. Except, of course, the French.

In *Wizard* #46, we offered 100 *Wizard* style points to whomever could supply us with the lyrics to the old 1960's Spider-Man cartoon theme song. We got over 100 letters with the lyrics, and even a bit more...



Die, Songbird

To: WizardTGTC@aol.com,

Lemme tell ya, I'm a sucker for style points...

The first verse of the Spider-Man theme song, as reported in *Wizard* #46:

"Spider-Man, Spider-Man/Does whatever a spider can/Spins a web any size/Catches thieves just like flies/Look out—here comes the Spider-Man!"

The next three verses (ahem):

"Is he strong?/Listen bud/He's got radioactive blood/Can he swing from a thread?/Take a look overhead/Hey, there—there goes the Spider-Man!

"In the chill of night/At the scene of a crime/Like a streak of light/he arrives just in time!

"Spider-Man, Spider-Man/Friendly neighborhood Spider-Man/Welcome fame?/He's ignored/Action is his reward/To him, life is a great big bang-up/Wherever there's a hang-up/You'll find the Spider-Mannnnnnn!"

Seth Johnson
sjohns14@students.wisc.edu

Thanks, Seth, you True Online Believer, you. And congratulations on writing the first-ever online letter to hit Magic Words. Those of you who are connected to America Online can reach these pages through Wizard World, the new Wizard online fan forum.

By the way, coming up with the proper lyrics wasn't easy for everyone. Some people kind of "misheard" them. My personal favorite is the one where someone started the second verse with "Is he strong?/Lift up stuff/He's got radioactive guts." Creative listening, indeed.

To the Tough Guys at Wizard,

While we're on the subject, I found the lyrics to the really putrid Captain America cartoon theme song from the '60s. You probably don't want to know these, but here they are anyway:

"When Captain America throws his mighty shield/All those who choose to oppose his shield must yield/If he's lead to a fight and the duel is true/The red and the white and the blue will come through/When Captain America throws his mighty shield!"

Pretty nasty stuff, huh? Oh well, now you know. And knowing is half the battle.

Anthony Dios
Holmdel, NJ

Knowing may be half the battle, Anthony, but in this case, I think I'd rather not know at all.

Hey, Wizard Goons,

As a special bonus, here are the words to "Cotton Eye Joe" by Rednex:

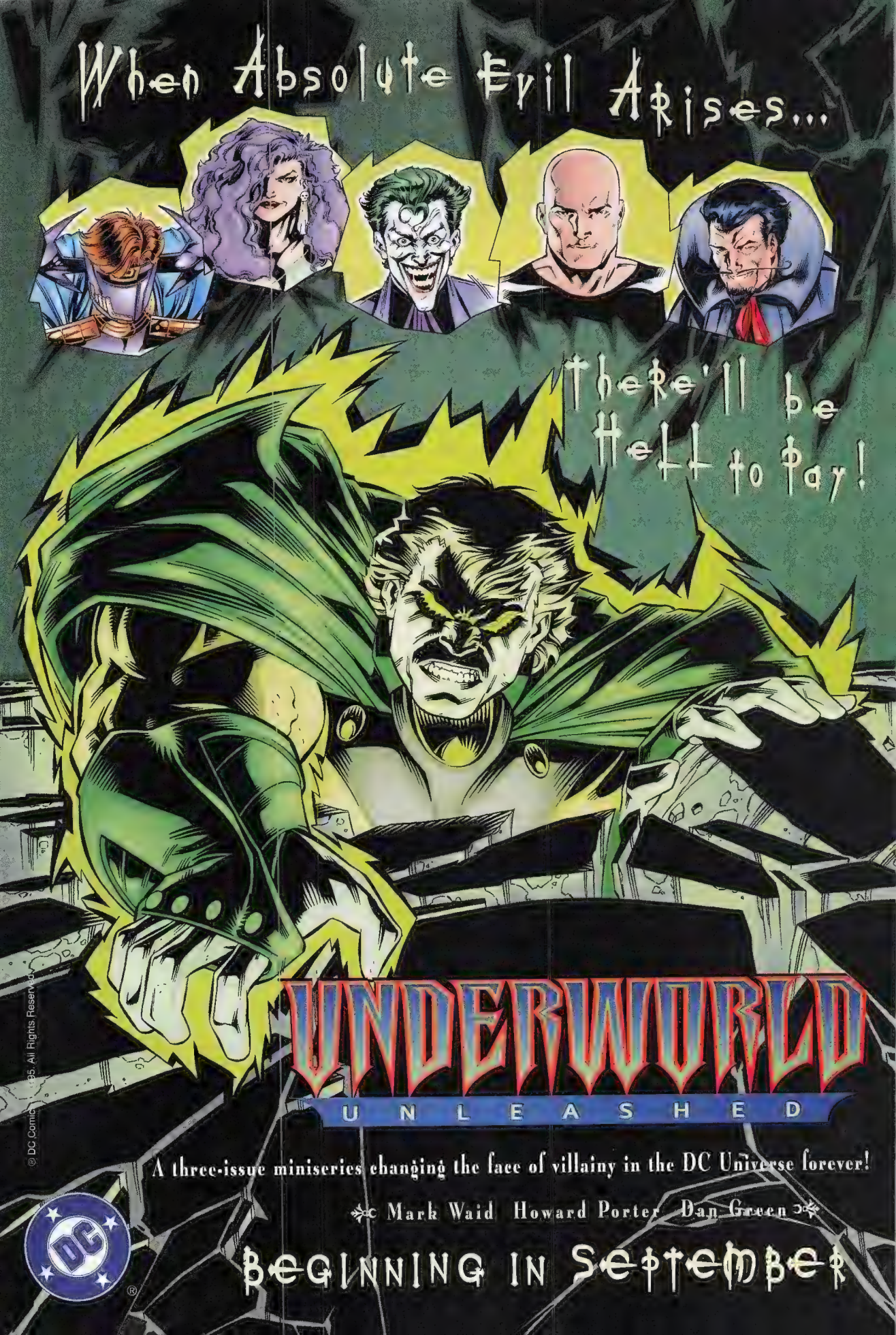
"If it hadna been for Cotton Eye Joe/I'd have been married a long time ago/Where did you come from? Where did you go?/Where did you come from, Cotton Eye Joe?"

Myron Meyer
Sioux Falls, SD

Gee, thanks! Now let's get a few facts straight, chump.

The song is entitled "Cotton-Eyed Joe," not "Cotton Eye Joe." And it is not, by any stretch of the imagination, "by Rednex." It is a traditional American two-step; "traditional" in this instance meaning that the song has been around so long that no one knows exactly who wrote it. One thing we do know for sure—the song is about a cotton farm foreman who works his crew

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS


When Absolute Evil Arises...
There'll be Hell to Pay!
UNDERWORLD
UNLEASHED
A three-issue miniseries changing the face of villainy in the DC Universe forever!
Mark Waid Howard Porter Dan Green
BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER
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incredibly hard. The crew doesn't like the fact that Cotton-Eyed Joe is a tough boss, and they hate the fact that he's such a great dancer that all the girls only want to dance with him. So every weekend, the crew beats the hell out of him, which just makes Joe work them harder the next week. So he gets beat even harder the next weekend. The song deals solely with the uniquely American concepts of ass-whippin' and come-uppance, something no sissy-Mary Swedish techno-crap band like Rednex knows the first thing about.

Get your facts straight and don't mess with The Kid when it comes to folk music.

I Wanna Rock!

Hey Wizard,

Are there any comic books of rock groups like Aerosmith or R.E.M.? My know-it-all cousin says there are, but I don't know.

Jessica Mitasky
Spangler, PA

Music-oriented comics have been tried many times and have usually met with limited success. Recently, Malibu put out a few of what it called "Rock-It! Comix," including a few truly outstanding books on Ozzy Osbourne and Carlos Santana. Alice Cooper appeared in a three-issue Marvel mini-series entitled* The Last Temptation. *Marvel now has a big music line in the works. Aerosmith, formerly managed by Acclaim Comics' Steve Massarsky, appeared in Valiant's* Shadowman *#19. Try your local comic shop for any of these.

Butt-Head vs. Homer

Dear Wizard,

I study comparative literature and I got a little angry with Jesse Corvino's letter in *Wizard* #46. I have now finally accepted that this generation should be called the moron generation. What should be expected from kids that think that the *Beavis and Butt-Head* cartoon is a form of art or that Pearl Jam is better than Mozart?

The problem with kids today is that they think they are better than people who lived decades ago because they have CDs, video games and other high-tech goodies. What they don't see is that without the "freaking Greeks or Romans" (as Corvino referred to them) we wouldn't even have comics.

That's right. Scrutinize history closely and you'll see that the first comics were done by people like the Egyptians, when they wrote in pictures. If you take time to read books, you will see that some comic heroes are based on characters from literature. For example, *Spawn* is a rip-off of *Faust*, a book written centuries ago by Goethe. In this book, an old man makes a pact with the devil so he can win the love of a young woman. At the end of the book when the devil comes to claim Faust's soul, Faust is pardoned by God and angels rescue him. I can already see Todd McFarlane lining up this type of ending when he closes out *Spawn*.

I am a big fan of comics. I love *Batman, X-Men, Spider-Man* and *Conan*. But I also read many books. I think we can learn from both. We have to expand our knowledge and respect those who went before us and gave us the CDs and video games we enjoy today. I heartily recommend Homer's books (no, not Bart Simpson's father!) *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to any comic fan just looking for a cool story.

And by the way, Vertigo readers—don't think that just because you read *Sandman*, you can go to comic stores saying you are more intelligent or literate than the other customers. *Sandman* is an excellent comic, but is not a substitute for all the literature that you could be reading. So start reading, comic brothers, and congratulations to you when you find the "other" magical way of reading.

Enrique García
Mayagüez, Puerto Rico

We got lots (and I mean lots) of letters from people who thought that Jesse Corvino was a tad bit off base with his blanket condemnation of all literature that didn't include the Punisher. The message here is a simple one, but one that bears repeating: Comics may be mighty cool, but there's a whole big honkin' world out there that doesn't have anything to do with comics. Try it sometime.

Shameless Plug

Dear Wizard,

Who was on the cover of *Wizard* #1?

Kimmy Randhawa
Crown Point, IN

Spider-Man, in a Todd McFarlane drawing that has been re-done and "computerized" for this very issue's cover. Whatcha think?

THE BUNNY AWARD

Paul Schinaldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

We Still Hate the French

Dear Wizard,

We at the Society Canadien of Free French Noblemen (or S.C.O.F.F.'N) are upset at your allegations in issue #45 that French nobles are responsible for messing up your Star Trek references. We have absolutely nothing to do with that. Our organization's lofty objectives are as follows:

1) Eating fine French pastries
2) Drinking beer (We are Canadian, after all)
3) World domination
4) Getting Alpha Flight its own comic back
5) Making bizarre laws that require you to use the word "ass" three times per issue (By the way, you're welcome)
6) Getting Paula's (You know, that Vampirella girl from issue #40) address; and
7) Creating a beer-flavored Pop Tart.

Our goals do not include screwing up your Star Trek references. We demand a public apology and a "Casting Call" for an Alpha Flight movie.

Pierre LeClaire
Wainwright, Alberta, Canada

Sorry. It's just a natural reaction to blame the French for everything around here. That Star Trek screw-up was probably our own fault.

By the way, we wish you at S.C.O.F.F.'N the best in achieving all your goals, except maybe number 7. We just don't think a beer-flavored Pop Tart would be the kind of thing that would get you going in the morning.

It's Slinky, It's Slinky...

Dear Wizard,

How in the world does Vampirella keep that little costume of hers from falling off?

David Flannery
Jacksonville, FL

In the comics, I would assume it's either two-sided adhesive tape or the fact that nothing really has to make sense in comics that keeps her costume up.

As for real-life Vampirella models that you see at conventions, I'm told by persons—ahem—"in the know," that they use a mild spray-on glue that comes from a can.

Dear Wizard,

If you were to make a series out of Lady Death fighting Vampirella, how many issues would it last? Who do you think would win?

Jamie Watson
Watertown, NY

It would last about as many issues as it would last, which by my estimation would be around 53,000 issues, definitely surpassing Action Comics and Detective Comics. The winners, of course, would be Chaos! Comics and Harris Comics.

Dear Jim,

How many artists worked on the old Warren *Vampirella* magazine? Who were they? Do the same artists work on Harris' version?

Chris Collins
Mullins, SC

The Warren Vampirella magazine ran from 1969 to 1983 and featured the work of many talented artists like Neal Adams, Vaughn Bode, Frank Frazetta, Wally Wood and Berni Wrightson. None of these swingin' hep cats are involved with the current Vampi series, though.

Piece o' Cake

Dear Wizard,

I am enclosing pictures of the birthday cake I made for my nephew, Cody. His favorite character is Venom. I would appreciate it if you could print this in your magazine. My nephew would be thrilled to see his cake in your publication.

I would have decorated my envelope, but my artistic talents are limited to buttercream frosting. Sorry.

Debbie Coy
Fletcher, NC

Thanks for the cool photo, but where were you when we really needed you—before the party? We'd better start getting some invites soon. I've got my party dress already picked out.

Today's Comics Suck!

Dear Wizard,

There have been two recent articles—Todd McFarlane's E.G.O. in *Wizard* #43 and Pat McCallum's Editorial in *Wizard* #45—that detailed reasons why someone stopped collecting comics. After reading these articles, I've been wondering why I read and collect less today than I did five years ago. The points below are my opinions on why comics today are worse than they were years ago.

1) Cost. The cost of comics is staggering. The average price of a comic today is over two dollars. Am I the only one that remembers 75 cent comics just a while ago? I can easily walk into a comic store today and buy 20 comics (which doesn't seem like a lot) and come out 40 bucks in the hole. Please start lowering the prices of comics! Go back to the old school. There's no reason why comics need to be on shiny super-premium paper. The new paper sucks—fingerprints show up easily and the cost has made me decrease the number of titles I collect.

2) The number of titles for one character. The expression "going to the well one too many times" comes to mind. Why did the Punisher, Ghost Rider and other formerly great characters get boring? Because they were overexposed, crossing over in every other comic and they had a zillion of their own titles. The bottom line is that there are just too many Bat, mutant, Spider and Superman titles.

3) Emphasis has shifted from story to art. Some people say a great comic book is one that has super art. Others say the story matters most. I think the real answer is somewhere in the middle. But I can't help feeling that *Amazing Spider-Man, Batman, Avengers, Thor* and *Fantastic Four* didn't get to 400 issues on great art alone. Today's comics rely too much on flashy art and not enough on strong storytelling. The art in comics today is great and artists in the industry are finally getting the respect they deserve, but if it comes at the expense of a good story, then who cares?

John Scott
Falls Church, VA

Comics worse today than five years ago? It's a mixed bag any way you look at it. But here's a little specific feedback on your points:

1) No, you're not the only person who remembers 75 cent comics. When I started buying comics, they were (get this!) 20 cents each. But right now the cost of all paper, especially the cheaper-looking, non-shiny paper, is going through the roof, and that's why many publishers are going to the super-shiny kind. It looks like low comic prices are an unfortunate casualty of rising paper costs. Fortunately, Marvel is launching a new line of 99 cent books.

2) Agreed. The Punisher was cool as all heck when he'd only pop up once a year in a Spider-Man or Daredevil story. But as soon as he started appearing in eight titles a month, we quickly saw how one-dimensional he was. Fortunately, this trend seems to be reversing itself. Marvel has recently tanked a bunch of cheesy titles like Blaze, Spirits of Vengeance, Punisher War Journal, Punisher War Zone and Punisher Stubs His Toe. But on the other hand, I

Hey! It's Pen Pals

Get in touch with your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 16. **NOTE:** Please write your **age** clearly on the envelope. Hey, make a friend!

P E N P A L S

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The Woodlands, TX 77381
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Likes: *Sandman, Batman, Catwoman*

Hans Peter Eckstein, Jr.
Age: 11 Sex: Male
Tegal Parang Utara V
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Jakarta, Indonesia
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Samson, AL 36477
Likes: *WildC.A.T.s, X-Men, Beast World*

think the tight continuity that exists in the five Superman titles works very well. Many seem to agree. The Super-titles are always big sellers.

3) Amen to that, brother. Again, this seems to be a trend slowly reversing itself. A few years ago, it seemed that people were willing to buy any book with flashy art, regardless of story content. Today, most fans are back to looking for a well-crafted story first and foremost.

Marvel Good, Fire Bad...

Dear Wizard,

Everyone is always talking about how awesome certain comics and comic publishers are, but I never hear anything about how awesome Marvel Comics is. In *Wizard* #42 when you printed the letters for the best and worst of 1994, it seemed that almost all of the letters you printed had Marvel in the "worst" area and all the other publishers in the "best." Why is it that every one of your letters and columns says that Image, DC and Dark Horse have better comics, yet Marvel sells more comics than any of them?

People complain about Marvel raising the price of its deluxe edition X-Titles to $1.95, but they're still a much better buy than Image and Dark Horse titles, that almost always cost more than $1.95.

I also hear a lot about how good the writers, pencilers and inkers at Image Comics are. I admit, many of them are good, but I think Marvel's are much better. I never hear anyone say how good Mark Bagley, Chuck Dixon, Adam and Andy Kubert, Scott Lobdell, Sal Buscema, Jeph Loeb, Dan Green, J.M. DeMatteis, Joe Rubinstein and all the other Marvel creators are. So for me and all the other Marvel fans, please print some more good things about Marvel.

Oh, and just in case you think I only read Marvel Comics, let me tell you that I read all the other publishers, too. I just like Marvel better and I don't like all the bad publicity it's getting.

Bryan Lavigne
Nitro, WV

One theme that I saw in the "Best of '94/Worst of '94" letters that ran in issue #42 was that most people put Marvel in both categories. People seem to have an opinion about and genuinely care about Marvel's books more than any other publishers' stuff. Love 'em or hate 'em, it seems all comic fans care about Marvel's characters and Everyone's Got Opinions (now where have I heard that before?) as to how they should be treated.

Spideyspeak

Dear Magic Words,

Where is this "snappy banter" Spider-Man you guys always talk about?

Andy Wismar
Wadsworth, OH

The hell if I know. Back in ye olden days (that's the 1960s and '70s to you, whippersnapper) Peter Parker was a good-natured, wisecracking, friendly neighborhood Spider-Man who used to quip the bad guys as often as he'd punch 'em in the chops. But as comics got more serious and grim in the late '80s and early '90s, so did Spidey. Now it looks like the old "real" Spidey is back and we've actually been seeing his clone since the mid-'70s. Will this return to "Classic Spidey" mean a return to the wiseguy Spidey from days of yore? Tune in next month.

Girl Talk

Wizard!

Ya know what, Wiz-kids? I'm getting sick of all these other women griping about how comics are made mostly for a male audience.

I'm a 14-year-old girl and I collect tons of titles, from *X-Men* and *Wolverine* to *Star Wars* and *The X-Files*. I've been collecting comics for quite a long time now, and reading *Wizard* for just about as long. And guess what? Comics aren't sexist. The people who write them don't write them just for one gender. Here's your latest news flash: They make them for COMIC ENTHUSIASTS! Enthusiasts of any gender! Is this concept so hard to grasp?

I don't mean to be harsh, but I think if you start complaining about these things, it'll take all the fun out of what you read. And that's what comics are for—fun. Entertainment. Amusement. Something to do on rainy days. Some may convey a message, some may be pointless, but whatever comic you read, it wasn't made to offend you, it was made to please you.

Gina Goad
Toledo, OH

So the message rings out once again: Read what you like, avoid what you don't and quit your bitchin' already. Not that I'll ever stop running inflammatory letters to rile everyone up. That just makes for good copy.

We Looked It Up

Sien·kie·wicz (Sin·kehv'·itch), Bill *n.* 1958–present; 1, comic book artist known for his bold style on such titles as Marvel's *Moon Knight*, *Elektra: Assassin*, Epic's *Stray Toasters* and DC's *Shadow* (2nd Series). Currently inking *Spectacular Spider-Man* 2, Most commonly mispronounced word in the entire comic book industry. Often confused with the matzo manufacturer Manischewitz.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

In *Wizard* #39, I read a letter by Suzanne S. Clark about female comic characters surrounding us with "erect nipples, breast implants, thong costumes and legs everywhere." At first I thought, "Yeah, I understand what you're sayin'. Most women in the world don't look like that. Of course, not many men in the world have huge pecs and biceps as big as bowling balls, either." I left it at that.

Then I read the letter column in *Wizard* #41. Ms. Clark wrote a follow-up letter explaining what women wanted to see in comics. OK, fair enough. She went on to explain how female superheroines were just there to pose and look pretty, calling them "Barbie bimbos." She wanted them to be smart and kick ass and I agree that they should. But if Suzanne would look around a bit more, she would see that the vast majority of female characters are already very intelligent and kick a lot of butt. Look at Zealot—extremely smart, extremely beautiful and extremely powerful. Another example of this is Frank Miller and

PEN PALS

Jordan McArthur
Age: 13 Sex: Male
2 Valencia Drive
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2T 3X8
Likes: All X-titles, *Gen*[13], *WildC.A.T.s*

Sera Tenar-Morey
Age: 16 Sex: Female
1462 Gregory St
Wendouree 3350
Victoria, Australia
Likes: *X-Men*, *Youngblood*, *WildC.A.T.s*

Jamie Calabrese
Age: 14 Sex: Male
281 Greenhaven
Tonawanda, NY 14150
Likes: Superman, Batman and Spider-Man books

Tammy Greer-Billings
Age: 23 Sex: Female
3186 Royal Knight Cove
Apt. 10
Memphis, TN 38118
Likes: Vertigo and Boneyard books

Lu Tran
Age: 18 Sex: Male
1101 Bounty Ct.
Spanks, NV 89431
Likes: Image titles, *Lady Death*, *X-Men*

Jill Schwartz
Age: 14 Sex: Female
145 Lincoln Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10306
Likes: *Ranma 1/2*, X-titles, Bongo titles

Darryl Heine
Age: 24 Sex: Male
1141 Carberry Circle
Inverness, IL 60067
Likes: Archie, Harvey and Looney Tunes titles

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Dave Gibbons' Martha Washington. She's a highly intelligent soldier who is as tough as they come.

As I see it, Suzanne, you already have what you asked for.

Josh Shipp
Memphis, TN

One thing that blows my mind is the fact—as I perceive it, at least—that for every woman who complains about the "Barbie bimbo" syndrome, there's another who loves the current take on female characters in comics. I see lots of letters from female readers complaining that Lady Death is a 48EE balloon-breasted bimbo, and probably an equal amount of letters from female readers who think that she's the greatest thing going today because she's a no-nonsense, butt-kickin', take-no-prisoners kind of woman. I think there is a wide range of female characters portrayed today, just as there is a wide range of male character portrayals. But the fact of the matter is that the comic women are almost always wearing some kind of micro-bathing suit or slinky lingerie when they go out to fight crime, while comic men are almost always covered from head to toe. That's the difference. Whether you think it's a good thing or a bad thing is your own individual decision, and probably depends on how much cloth you like to see on the average human body. Which brings us to our next letter...

Dear Wizard,

I was reading my friend's copy of *Wizard* #44 in school one day and my teacher grabbed it and started yelling at us about how she dislikes pornography.

But listen to this: We had to go on a field trip to an art museum. The museum was full of naked people in paintings and sculptures and then she said that the naked human body is art.

Playboy is a pornographic magazine, but in *Wizard* all of the drawings are of characters that are covered up. Me and my friend got mad at her because she hates comic books and because we got in trouble because she judged a book by its cover.

Ian Herrett
Colrain, MA

Hoo, boy. These ones are tougher than the "Iron Man vs. The X-Men" letters.

In this society, we have a flexible view of what a nude or scantily-clad human body represents. In some cases, for instance if painted or sculpted by a recognized studio artist, a naked human body may be considered "art."

In other cases, for instance if drawn on a comic book cover, a sultry-looking stocking-clad woman may be considered "pornography."

What's the difference between art and pornography? That's in the eye of the beholder. Speaking strictly personally here, I think that the intent of the work is the most important factor, not the amount of clothing. Is Playboy *pornography? I honestly don't think so. I think it's one of the most literate, well-written, well-rounded magazines on the market today. And it also has photos of nude women in it. I dig it a lot, even though it has all those incredibly annoying perfume inserts in it.*

Is Hustler *pornography? I think so. The intent of the magazine and what it does with similar photos of other nude women is different than what* Playboy *does, and that should be readily apparent to anyone who has seen both magazines.*

Is Wizard *pornography? I think not. And neither are the paintings in the art museum. Again, I think intent is most important. Neither we nor the art museum are looking to titillate. We're looking to inform, instruct or just provide art for art's sake. We're not gratuitous; we're both providing with just a tad bit of depth to it.*

Then again, everybody's got their own opinion, your teacher included.

Love Her to Death

Wizard,

I was in art class a few days ago looking at a book of Egyptian symbols when I noticed the symbol—an ankh—that the DC character Death (from *Sandman*) wears around her neck. I figured instantly that it would have to be the Egyptian symbol for death, but I was amazed when I saw that it actually was symbolic of life. Why would a character who is the embodiment of death wear a symbol around her neck which meant life?

Scott Wilson
Bandon, OR

Because, in the words of DC Comics' marketing trooper Maureen McTigue, "Death really loves life. She doesn't kill people—she's simply there at the end to lead them from life." For more on Death's love of life, check out DC's incredibly bitchin' Death: The High Cost of Living *mini-series from 1993, where Death gets to "live" a day as a mortal.*

Star Spangled Fish

Dear Wizard,

Why does Captain America's costume look like it's made up of multi-colored fish scales?

Matt Corl
Phelps, NY

Because underneath his red-white-and-blues, Cap wears chain mail, an armor made of small chain links which gives him a good deal of protection against many things the bad guys try to dish out.

Damn Your Eyes

Dear Wizard,

If Daredevil had an operation to regain his sight, would he become a better superhero or would he lose his radar sense?

Neil Kelly
Brooklyn, NY

I think he'd be better. The "old" origin of DD receiving his radar sense from the radioactive isotope that struck his face has been updated by the "new" one in which Stick taught him how to use a "radar sense," something we all possess. Daredevil already knows how to use this sense. If he regained his eyesight, he'd still have it. And if you're looking for a Daredevil story where he actually does regain his eyesight, check out Daredevil *#223. Yeah, it's a* Secret Wars II *crossover, but it's still pretty good!*

Sheesh

Jim,

Is Shi's name pronounced with a long i or a long e?

Jordan Shepherd
Amarillo, TX

A long "e." It's pronounced "she," not "shy."

UPC is OK

Dear Wizard,

I recently bought a copy of *Gen*^{13} #1. My friend and I later compared copies we had both bought and he pointed out that mine had a UPC symbol on the lower left hand corner. Is this going to affect the value of the comic?

Joseph Derensis
Rochester, NY

Nope. Your two Gen^{13}*s are just newsstand and direct versions of the same comic—the newsstand version having the UPC symbol. The books, and their values, are exactly the same. Newsstand vs. direct is a good rule of thumb on UPC vs. non-UPC books, but it's not true in 100 percent of all cases.*

Holy Conspiracy, Azrael!

Dear Wizard,

While looking at the poster that came with the bagged version of *Superman* #75, I noticed something strange. All the pallbearers underwent massive changes. Hal Jordan (Green

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GARNER
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image
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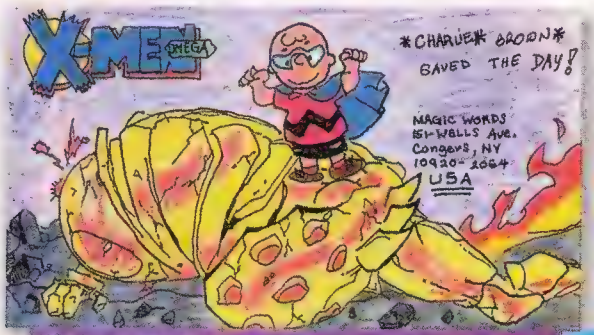
LETTER ART

Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive an *Amazing Spider-Man* #386 signed by David Michelinie, *Warriors of Plasm* #1 signed by Jim Shooter, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original framed Greg Capullo sketch of the evilest clown around, Violator.

Kevin Kilstrom Redmond, WA

Cahl Schroedl Canberra, Australia



Malvin Calubad Kalookan City, Philippines

Robert Balderson Southfield, Michigan

Lantern) was replaced with Kyle Rayner. Batman was replaced by Azrael. Wonder Woman was replaced by Artemis. The Flash was replaced by some person that I don't know the name of. Aquaman had his hand chewed up and replaced with a harpoon and now Robin isn't sure that Batman wants him around anymore.

Was DC foreshadowing up-coming changes or was it just coincidence?

Jeremy Mahnken
East Brunswick, NJ

According to our well-placed DC spies, it's just coincidence. No foreshadowing intended—it's just another example of the breakneck pace of massive comic changes happening these days.

Bone vs. Smurfs

Wizard,

Is Bone made out of...bone, or is he soft and smooshy like Smurfs?

Eric Legris
Lunenburg, MA

We asked Jeff Smith, Bone creator, and he said that the Bone cousins are, "Just like any animals. They've got bone structure and flesh on top of that. But I also picture them as being cartoon-tough, kind of like Droopy Dog. If you drop them, they bounce. And if you can get them going down the stairs just right, they're just like a slinky."

Stop in the Name of Love

Wizard,

Has their ever been a Red or Yellow Lantern?

Doyle Clark
Erin, TN

Yes. They teamed with Green Lantern right there in your hometown of Erin, TN in a group they called the Stoplight Corps. For years they were the protectors of the city, regulating automobile traffic and making the streets safe for pedestrians everywhere. Then the mill closed down, people moved out of town, traffic decreased and they were replaced by a stop sign, never to be seen again.

An extra page and I'm outta room already? Oh well. See you next month.

Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin can actually say things like "traditional American two-step" with a straight face. And he listens to something he calls "Western swing." And he dances like a friggin' bozo. This guy's got to get hip.

Send letters to:
Magic Words
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920
or e-mail us at WizardTGTC@AOL.Com

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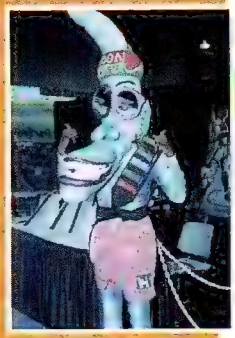
WHEN TITANS CLASH: The Hulk Meets Pitt

Realistically muscled champion of justice visits local comic show and marks attendees with his scent. "He was an unmerciful sprayin' machine!" sobbed ill-smelling ex-fan.

Voice of Elvis heard emanating from severed lounge lizard head. "Somebody get me a 14-year-old girl...and some peanut butter," uttered unearthly toothy maw moments before vomiting and passing out in a toilet.



Prolonged exposure to acetate covers has devastating results. "Get down, get funky!" rejoiced overexposed freak, moments before being pantsed and beaten.

Coming in 1996, the meeting that will knock Wrestlemania off the map: Marvel's big green gamma machine vs. Dale Keown's alien behemoth in chains and jeans. Yes, it's Hulk vs. Pitt. And it's finally here.

The one-shot bookshelf comic will be jointly published by Marvel and Keown's Full Bleed Studios, an imprint of Image Comics, with a story by Peter David, the long-time writer of *Incredible Hulk* and art from former *Hulk* artist Keown. It marks the first reunion of the creative team since their work together on *Incredible Hulk* in 1992.

"I told [Marvel] a year ago that, of all the crossovers, this would be the one to do," Keown told *Wizard*. "Peter and I will brainstorm after I finish *Pitt* #10 [sometime in late August or September]."

David was equally enthusiastic about the meeting. "At the Marvel Edge conference, Bobbie [Chase, Marvel Edge editor] asked me what I thought of doing Hulk vs. Pitt. I immediately said I thought it would be a real kick." Chase told David that Keown wanted him to handle the writing. "If Dale is trusting me that implicitly with his character, I couldn't turn around and say no. As a result, I can assure you I will treat Pitt with the utmost respect and not have the Hulk hand Pitt his head in the first five pages."

Keown acknowledged that trust: "I'm really going to give Peter full rein. I really trust his writing ability. I'm interested to see how we're going to merge the two universes."

David said the deal is too fresh for him to have firm ideas about plot details. "Obviously, with something like this and these kinds of characters, you have to have some sort of slugfest," he said. "The fans will be disappointed if there's not. I'll probably have Rick Jones get together with *Pitt*'s Timmy. I think the two of them comparing notes could be one of the highpoints of the book."

■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

*THIS SCENE FROM WIZARD #39 -- ED

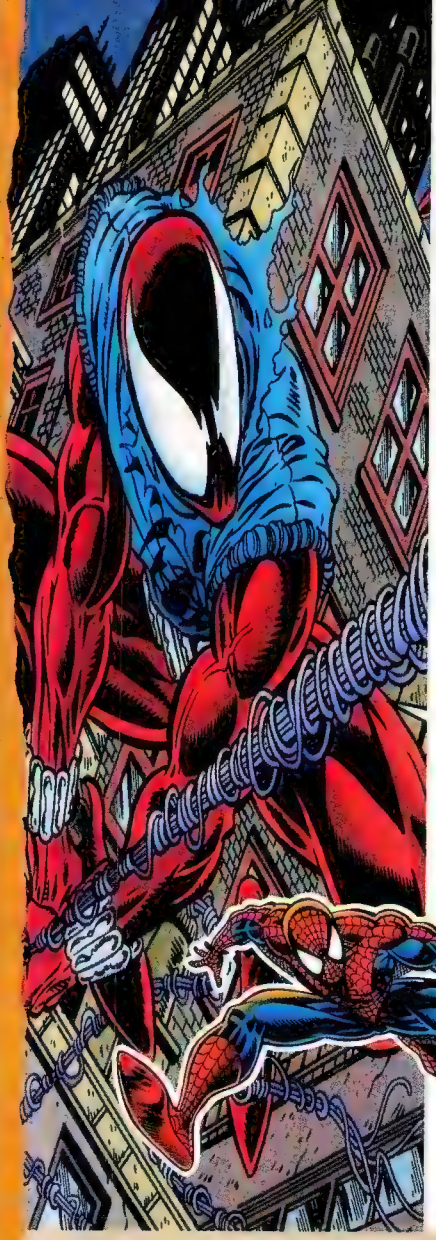
ahead

THE SPIDEYS SPLIT!

MESSNER-LOEBS TO WRITE THOR!

MIRAGE DROPS NINJA TURTLES COMICS!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!



Spider-Man and the Scarlet Spider Go Their Separate Ways

Spider-Man returns! Even though he's been around for a while.

This November, the true Peter Parker, currently known as Ben Reilly, is reclaiming the mantle of Spider-Man which he lost 20 years ago in *Amazing Spider-Man* #151, according to Spider-Man family editor-in-chief Bob Budiansky. The true Clone, who has unwittingly been posing as Peter Parker for the past five years in comic book time, takes up Reilly's former mantle of The Scarlet Spider and gains his own ongoing title, albeit one that already exists. Confused? Not for long.

Following the Scarlet Spider titles running through September and October (see Picks on page 138), the ongoing Spider-Man titles return to their standard names and numbering in November. Only *Web of Scarlet Spider* will continue as an ongoing title, replacing *Web of Spider-Man*.

Also in November, Dan Jurgens begins his much-anticipated run as writer and penciler on the new monthly, though tentatively titled, *Sensational Spider-Man* #1.

As for the fate of Peter Parker's name itself, Budiansky had this to say: "There is a Peter Parker who is married to Mary Jane. So Ben asks himself the question, 'Does it make sense to take over the identity of Peter Parker, when there's already one out there?' At least for now, it doesn't seem like a good idea, particularly since he's not married to Mary Jane. He's also going to be in New York City and doesn't want people identifying him as Peter Parker, since he doesn't have all of Peter's life experiences."

And as for future villains, both Spideys will be facing a revitalized Mysterio who will pop up in the pages of *Sensational Spider-Man*, along with a new supervillain, Armada, who enters the fray as Mysterio's employee. Also, Silver Sable and the Sandman will be making their long-awaited return.

Creative teams for the Spider-Man books will be as follows:

- *The Sensational Spider-Man* (Writer/Penciler: Dan Jurgens; Inker: Klaus Janson)
- *Web of Scarlet Spider* (Writer: Evan Skolnik; Penciler: Paris Karonous; Inker: Randy Emberlin)
- *Spider-Man* (Writer: Howard Mackie; Penciler: John Romita Jr.; Inker: Al Williamson)
- *The Amazing Spider-Man* (Writer: Tom DeFalco; Penciler: Mark Bagley; Inker: Larry Mahlstedt)
- *The Spectacular Spider-Man* (Writer: Todd DeZago; Penciler: Sal Buscema; Inker: Bill Sienkiewicz)

■ *Chris Griffen*

GAIMAN, VESS COLLABORATE ON STARDUST FOR VERTIGO

The award-winning team of Neil Gaiman and illustrator Charles Vess are combining their efforts once again.

Gaiman is collaborating with Charles Vess, his partner on the award-winning "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (*Sandman* #19) and the forthcoming series-ending *Sandman* #75, on an unusual new creator-owned project entitled *Stardust* for DC Comics' Vertigo imprint.

"*Stardust* is, in fact, a short novel, incredibly heavily illustrated, rather than a traditional graphic novel," Gaiman explained. "It is a story told in text format with accompanying illustrations. The story is set in a little English village which is next door to the Faerie realm and is about a young man named Tristan—who is half Faerie—and what happens when he goes over the wall into Faerie after he sees a falling star and promises his true love that he will bring it to her.

"Because the star has fallen on the Faerie side of the wall, rather than being a lump of molten meteorite or whatever it would have been had it fallen in our world, it is instead this incredibly disagreeable, ill-tempered young lady with a broken leg," he continued. The two end up on the run from a number of different factions who are all hunting the fallen star.

Stardust will be a four-issue prestige format series, with each issue containing 48 pages (two chapters) of text and fully painted art. It will be scheduled for release "around Christmas of 1996" if all goes according to schedule, said Vertigo Executive Editor Karen Berger.

Acknowledging the unusual nature of the project, she laughed that "we don't know exactly what we will get when Neil and Charles are finished, but we do know that it will be wonderful." ■ *Jack Curtin*

THE ONCE AND FUTURE HULK

With the success of the new retro-series *The Untold Tales of Spider-Man*, Marvel Comics is applying the same formula to the Hulk with *The Savage Hulk*. The one-shot, shipping in November, will present untold tales of days when the Hulk's dialogue rarely rose above "Hulk smash puny humans!" with story and art by industry heavyweights, according to Marvel Edge editor Bobbie Chase.

"It will be stories of the old Hulk written and drawn by various wonderful people, with a framework by [current *Hulk* writer] Peter David. All of them are getting the 'savage Hulk' out of their system because he hasn't been around for so long," she said. The "savage" version of the green goliath last appeared on a regular basis in 1986's *Incredible Hulk* #323.

Among the people involved are Adam Kubert and Simon Bisley (doing the cover), Dave Gibbons, Michael Golden, Sam Kieth, Scott Lobdell, Jeph Loeb, Matt Wagner, William Messner-Loebs and Tim Sale.

Meanwhile, in the ongoing *Incredible Hulk*, more of the green guy's past will be coming back, and it will affect his future in a *big* way starting in issue #436, shipping this October. "'Ghosts of the Future' is a four-issue story in which a person from Banner's past returns to haunt him. We're throwing off a lot of misleading clues because we're bad that way," Chase said.

"I'm tying together elements from his past and going into his future," David explained. "I've been toying with his preoccupation with becoming the Maestro character from *Future Imperfect* and everything that future entails. Up until now, he's been petrified of that future, but because of the events of this story, he winds up embracing it...which should set the series on an interesting road."

A new artist will take over the book with the first part of the new storyline, *Warlock and the Infinity Watch*'s Angel Medina. "I'm ecstatic about working with Angel again. We had a tremendously fulfilling creative partnership on *Dreadstar*," David continued. "I think the combination of Angel Medina and this storyline will really grab the reader's attention."

Patrick Daniel O'Neill

company updates

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Join the whole Cerebus gang as their World Tour hits Pitt Stop '95 on September 9th at the Holiday Inn—University Center, 100 Lytton Avenue in Pittsburgh. Also attending the show will be Steve Bissette, William Tucci, Jim Valentino, Mark Oakley, Mark Wheatley and Matt Feazell.

AC COMICS

AC Comics and Capital City Distributors are teaming up in a calling of all female artists to enter the Bad Girl Backlash art contest. AC wants to show that all superheroines don't have to be "Bad Girls." To enter, female artists should send a drawing or painting of a FemForce character. Artists are free to change hair, body style and costume, as long as they identify the character. The winner's art will be on the cover of a special "all female" issue that collects the best entries. Part of the proceeds are donated to Easter Seals. Entries must be received by September 22. Mail all entries to: AC Comics, P.O. Box 52-1216, Longwood, FL 32752-1216.

ADHESIVE COMICS

#4 of Shannon Wheeler's *Too Much Coffee Man*—winner of Best New Series in the Eisner Awards—is slated to ship in September, and has the caffeinated crusader fall in love!

ARCHIE COMICS

A major crossover story with a heavy impact on Riverdale hits the Archie books this September, as the Archie gang attempts to prevent the demolition of the Riverdale House. Will staging a protest be enough? And what secrets does the house hold? The story runs through *Archie* #442, *Betty & Veronica* #95 and *Jughead* #76, which all have interlocking covers.

ARIA PRESS

Colleen Doran's fan-favorite series *A Distant Soil* continues in September, as the long-awaited issue #12 presents a brand-new chapter in the science fantasy saga.

BLACKOUT COMICS

September is a big month for Blackout Comics as they release two new ongoing titles. *Hari Kari* #0 slashes its way to the stands as a new female ninja series. Also in September, *Pogz 'N' Slammee* #0 becomes the first title published under the Blackout Kids imprint for younger readers.

BONGO COMICS

It's the Simpsons vs. the Flanders in *Simpsons Comics* #12, when Springfield enters the future and the two freaky families enter a climate-controlled Biodome. The $2.25 book is a September release. And don't miss *Jimbo* #2 the same month, as Gary Panter's surreal series really gets going, and Jimbo goes against the Friend Catcher.

BONEYARD PRESS

The law firm of Jeffer, Mangels, Butler & Marmaro are trying to have Boneyard's *Doin' Time with O.J.* books and *O.J.'s Big Bust Out* banned. Boneyard has previously defended itself in court with its Jeffrey Dahmer biography. "I've already gone to the mat over this exact same case and won, so I'm not worried this time," said Boneyard Publisher Hart Fisher.

RAVEN CHRONICLES #3

CALIBER PRESS

OZ goes biweekly for September and October, offering four specials which spotlight individual characters and take place between August's #0 and the title's first issue. September's specials are *Scarecrow* #1 and *Lion* #1, while October's include *Tin Man* #1 and *Freedom Fighters* #1, each for $2.95. ...Critically acclaimed British creator Nabiel Kanan's *Exit* series begins in September, featuring a powerful story about human interaction....Under the New Worlds imprint, September's *Raven Chronicles* #3 has the paranormal investigators of Raven, Inc. find a jungle tribe of psionically enhanced people. It'll be 48 pages for the regular price of $2.95.

CHAOS! COMICS

While Steven Hughes is busy working on the next Lady Death mini-series, new artist Justiniano will pencil the new *Evil Ernie: Straight to Hell* five-issue mini. The first issue ships in October, features a coffin-shaped cover by Hughes and puts the Evil One on a deadly quest for Lady Death.

CLAYPOOL COMICS

This September, Elvira interviews compulsive novelist Steven Sting and protects him from his rival Anne Spice in *Elvira* #28, while Kirby Collier's dreams are invaded by familiar, but evil, faces in *Deadbeats* #14.

COMICO

Two returns occur in September, as Tommy Czuchra—the first Monolith—comes back, but not under the best circumstances (unless you call his revelation of a teammate's betrayal good). Plus, *Strike Force America* #1 puts the superteam's adventures back on the shelves.

DARK HORSE COMICS

In August, Dark Horse is re-issuing February's original *Dream Corridor Special*, which will contain the original contents, but also new material, including the full "Midnight in the Sunken Cathedral" prose story and an interview with Ellison himself. ...Congratulations to Dark Horse for being named "1994 Licensee of the Year" by Twentieth Century Fox for its use of the Aliens and Predator licenses. ...Congrats to Rick Geary for winning the Reuben award by the National Cartoonists' Society for his work on the children's book *The Night Before Christmask*.

DC COMICS

Congratulations to Green Lantern writer Ron Marz and his lovely wife on the birth of their seven-pound nine-ounce boy Killian Liam. The cute li'l tyke, "with a full head of hair," Marz says, was born on Monday, July 10. (Now, why didn't they call him Kyle...?)

DISABLED COMIC COLLECTOR'S CLUB

We erroneously misprinted the club's address in issue #47. For more info, write to the club at 1523 County Road 1551, East Cullman, AL 35055. Sorry for any inconvenience.

ENTITY COMICS

Cyberhood #0 tells the tale of 12-year-old Jack Stride, who is kidnapped by a wacko scientist and changed into the hero known as Cyberhood. Written and illustrated by Bill Maus, this $2.50 book ships in October.

LOEBS FILLS HIS PLATE TO THE MAXX

Writer Bill Messner-Loebs and artist Mike Deodato Jr., who created a high profile for DC's *Wonder Woman*, will shift their godly attention to Marvel's *Thor* with issue #496, giving them just four issues to ratchet events up for the milestone #500. Messner-Loebs also has been tapped to write a Maxx/Gen[13] crossover and an Artemis mini-series, spinning off from that character's run in *Wonder Woman*.

Messner-Loebs plans a new direction for *Thor*, following the dramatic events penned by Warren Ellis. "Warren pretty well deconstructed everything, so I want to see how I can build it back up without turning it into what we had before," he said. That means that he'll "take the characters you expect—Odin, Loki, Don Blake—and put them in a bag and shake really hard. When they reappear, I'll be surprised if anyone recognizes them."

He also is psyching up for the team-up of The Maxx, Sam Kieth's purple, MTV-starring character, which he currently scripts, and WildStorm's popular Gen[13] team. "What strikes me about Gen[13] is that it has that bouncy, improvised feeling that the original X-Men had," Messner-Loebs noted. "I'm also pleased to see that, for once on a team, the women outnumber the men." No art team had been selected at press time, and the project is not yet on WildStorm's schedule.

And if readers are left wondering how an Artemis mini-series is happening when the character died in *Wonder Woman* #100, Messner-Loebs laughed, "She gets better." *Artemis: Requiem*, a four-issue mini-series, has Artemis being freed from hell to join a group called the Hellenders, who are devoted to sorting out the ramifications from the *Underworld Unleashed* crossover. "They think they're tough enough to stand up to anybody," Messner-Loebs explained, "but they're wrong."

It also has not yet been scheduled.

■ *Craig Shutt*

company updates

EVENT COMICS

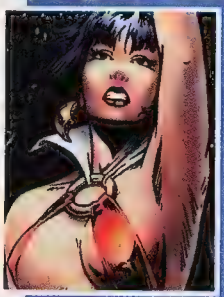
Things heat up in October when *Ash* #6 features an alternate cover by former Ghost Rider artist Mark Texeira. As for the issue, Ash is gettin' down at a local club when a mob war breaks out. That winged freak Gabriel takes on the mob guys and Ash takes on Gabriel. Then things really start getting weird.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

Mr. Natural reveals the Secret of Life in *Complete Crumb Comics Vol. 11*, which ships in September....August sees Buddy stuck watching his impossible niece and nephew, while his sister is off taking her nursing exam. It all happens in *Hate* #20, retailing for $2.95. Both of these humorous books are for you mature readers.

HARRIS COMICS

The first issue of the all-new Vampi series *Vampirella Strikes* features Harris' first-ever photo cover, starring the beautiful "real-life" Vampirella. The series will offer special team-ups and serial stories. *Vampirella Strikes* #1, which focuses on the vigilante Passion, ships in October, the same month *Vengeance of Vampirella* #19 brings the penultimate chapter of Vampi's "Mystery Walk" origin story.



HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

Keep your eyes out for a major Double Impact/Hellina crossover, set for January. High Impact's Chino and Jazz will meet Lightning's main female star in two books, one from each company. Before that, prepare yourself for a shocker in Symbols of Justice this fall, as the team is morderously cut in half.

IMAGE COMICS

• Cartoon Books

October sees the release of *Bone* #21, the first Image issue. If you're new to Bone, this is a good time to jump on, as Fone Bone & Co. bump into those stupid, stupid rat creatures. Guaranteed chuckles for only $2.95.

• Highbrow Entertainment

With the Dragon missing in action, Rapture and She-Dragon go head-to-head in an all-out brawl. It all happens in *Savage Dragon* #23.... The conclusion to the four-part mini-series *Star* features some shocking secrets about the hero's past, as well as guest appearances by The Savage Dragon and Rapture....*SuperPatriot: Liberty & Justice* #4 contains the final confrontation (and final issue) between the SuperPatriot and The Covenant of the Sword.

• WildStorm Productions

Congrats to Jim Lee for winning the "Yellow Kid Award" for Best Foreign Penciler by the Italian International Comics and Cartooning Exhibition. Nice goin', Jim!...WildStorm has confirmed that a Gen[13] special is in the works, to be penciled by Adam Hughes. Current plans call for Hughes to spend a month at the studio's California headquarters to focus on the book. No writer has been selected yet, and the book is not yet scheduled....The second issue of the anthology title *WildStorm!* ships in September, and features a Deathblow tale and a Black Razor story where former WildC.A.T. leader Spartan must assume command of the team....Also shipping in September is *Zealot* #2, which sees Zealot back at a monastery in feudal Japan with a man who may just be her true love.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST.

X-O MANOWAR. IN SEPTEMBER.

55 & 56: EARTH INVASION. X-O VS. ALIENS.
BY RON MARZ, BART SEARS, & ANDY SMITH.

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LAST AVENGERS STORY TOLD

Peter David's *The Last Avengers Story*, which got a lot of attention when it ran as a series in his "But I Digress" column in *Comics Buyer's Guide*, will be published by Marvel as a two-issue painted mini-series this fall. The art will be done by Ariel Olivetti.

David explained that the story was originally developed in the aftermath of DC's *The Dark Knight Returns* and was viewed as an opportunity for Marvel to produce a tale with the same level of maturity. "The idea was to present the Avengers at their absolute nadir head-to-head with their opponents, who are at their greatest strength—a tale of hopeless odds," he said. But when Marvel Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter, who had approved the original plot, was replaced by Tom DeFalco, the approval disappeared, David recalled. "Tom felt *The Last Avengers Story* should be a big fight issue with all the most powerful Avengers against all the most powerful villains." Since that wasn't the story David had written, and he had no interest in doing DeFalco's version, the idea was shelved.

Several years later, David used the plot to fill his "Digress" column while he was overseas working on the films *Trancers 4* and *Trancers 5*. "I figured it had no other life because it was completely negated by continuity shifts since I wrote it," he said. The tremendous response to that printing of the bare-bones plot led Marvel to suggest that the story appear as a comic book, exactly as David had first envisioned it.

Naturally, that means the story has little or no connection with the current Marvel Universe, which has changed much in the ensuing years. "In places where I could cover things with dialogue, I did," David noted. "But I didn't change anything in my plot...such as the existence of Wanda and Vision's kids. [Editor's Note: Their "kids" were wiped out as the result of a 1989 *Avengers West Coast* storyline]. I've written an introduction that explains all this and says to the reader, 'Suspend your disbelief and let's rock....'" ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

ADVERTISEMENT EXCLUSIVE

A LITTLE BLACK MAGIC

Malibu, with a few Marvel friends, is back in black—with their controversial new project Black September.

by Charles Richmond

"Which Spider-Man clone is that? Is that Ben Reilly or Peter Parker?" said a fan to a Malibu Comics representative at this summer's Chicago Comicon. The answer is, neither—it's Prime, and he's real.

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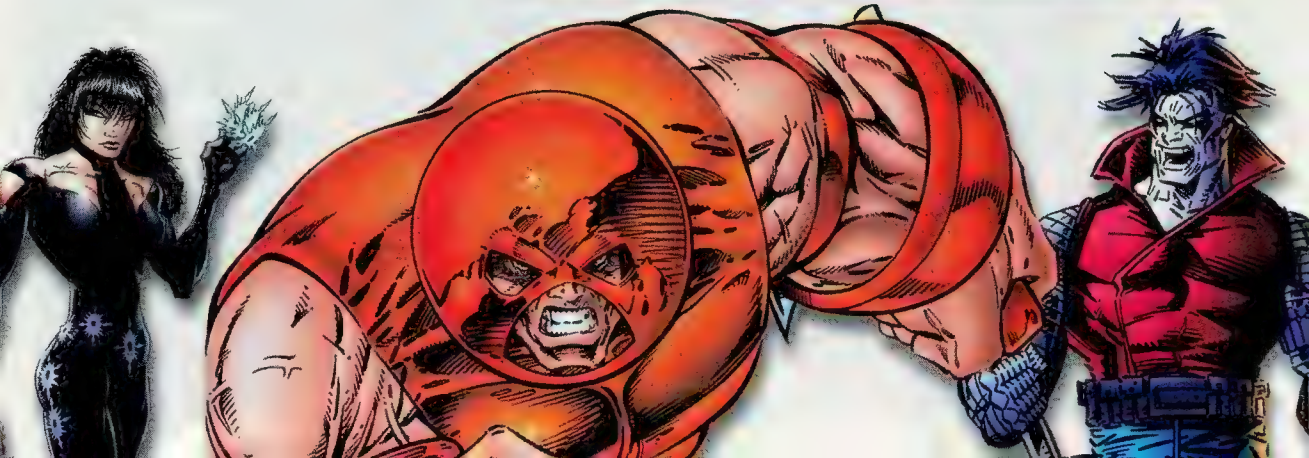


"Well slap me on the butt and call me Spanky," you're probably thinking. "The last time I looked, Prime was some snot-sucking kid who morphed into a buffed-out, straight-laced barrel-chested superhero." And right you'd be. But during Malibu Comics' Black September project, Prime's going to the Marvel Universe and by the time Prime gets back, Malibu will have a major syndicated cartoon show, a toy line in Toys 'R' Us, and a comic book connected to the X-Universe. Malibu's back.

In 1993, Malibu followed up the revolution it began in comic publishing with Image Comics by launching the Ultraverse. Flat-out stomping on much of the other upstart competition at that time, the Ultraverse quickly established itself as a home for Prime, Rune, Mantra, and solid story-telling with compelling art. And all was well for two years...

But Malibu's shaking the tree now. Intertwining its Ultraverse superhero line with the Marvel Universe, Malibu brought Loki, Thor, The Black Knight, The Infinity Gems, and The Avengers from Marvel's House of Ideas to the Ultraverse. The result? Calamity! The Ultraverse and the Marvel Universe will collide into a strange hybrid universe during Black September causing all the Ultraverse books to be "Infinity" issues, without numbers and with a ∞ sign. For September, all the covers will be solid black except for the logos and new $1.50 price. Twenty percent of the print run will be special variant covers of all ∞ issues computer painted by hot Fleer artist Chuck Maiden. Bug your store for these now. When the Ultraverse returns in October, everything will be different and will be based on the Black September Infinity issues. Expect some controversy.

This winter, Galoob Toys, the makers of Micro Machines, will be releasing a full line of UltraForce action figures.

By the end of Black September, Malibu will have cut back its publishing line by 50%, cut its cover price from $2.50 to $1.50, and have a book connected to the mega-successful X-franchise with the Juggernaut in *The All New Exiles*. Prime will return to the Ultraverse as Spider-Prime; Mantra will return as a teen, blond and definitely all girl; and Adam Warlock, of *Warlock and The Infinity Watch/Infinity Gauntlet* fame will reside in the pages of *Rune*. DIC will launch a cartoon show based on *UltraForce* and Lewis Galoob Toys' UltraForce action figure line will make Prime available to every kid in America. The steam's just started to build.

At the center of all this excitement are Ultraverse editors Hank Kanalz and Roland Mann. "Fans will be surprised in the fall. If they think they know how it's all going to pan out, they're going to be shocked," said Kanalz. "We've still got some surprises up our sleeves. If fans never thought they'd see X-Men characters adventuring in the Ultraverse, they're not prepared for what's next," said Mann.

And whatever's next will definately catch attention. At the heart of the storm of controversy sits Malibu's Ultraverse.

With Spider-Man, X characters, Ultraverse toys, the *UltraForce* cartoon shown nationally, $1.50 cover prices and a a whole new launch of #1 issues with new characters when the Ultraverse comes back this October... It'll be a banner year and a major new start for the Ultraverse.

This fall will see the cartoon *UltraForce* hit the airwaves.

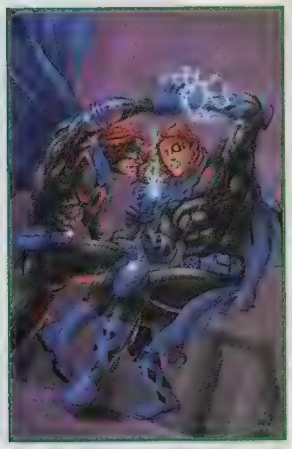
ADVERTISEMENT EXCLUSIVE

THE ALL NEW EXILES™

September Variant Cover
Juggy hops a dimension into the Ultraverse in *The All New Exiles* #∞. Black September jumpstarts this new series as Marvel mutants The Reaper, Siena Blaze, and Ultraverse fan-favorite Shuriken join in the mayhem. The series is launched in October during New World Order with *The All New Exiles* #1.

MANTRA®

Peroxide? No, Mantra's not dyed her hair—Mantra used to be a man in the body of a woman. During *Mantra* #∞, Mantra loses her powers and they seize a new host. It's an all-new, all-female Mantra launched in October's *Mantra* #1!

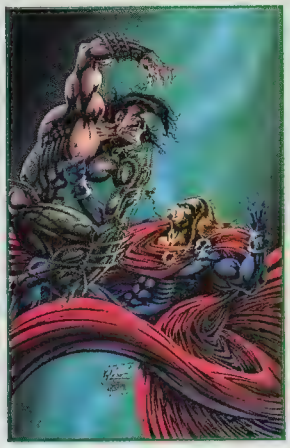


THE NIGHT MAN®

September Variant Cover
The Night Man's double stays in the Ultraverse, while the old Night Man is trapped on Marvel's earth! The parallel universe duplicate action starts in *The Night Man* #∞ during September and launches in *The Night Man* #1 in October.

PRIME®

Maximum Clonage? Nope. Prime's meeting with Spider-Man during Black September has changed his outlook. He's coming back to the Ultraverse during the New World Order with an all new series—look for *Prime* #1 in October.

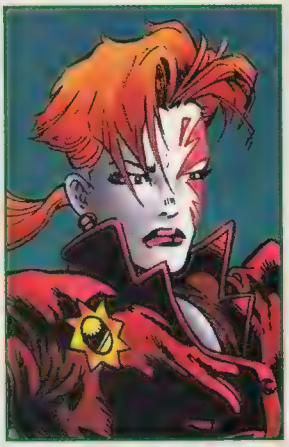


RUNE®

Adam Warlock is reborn in the Ultraverse, but how? Oh yeah, and Rune battles Annihilus in The Negative Zone! The vampiric bad breath is kick-started with *Rune* #∞ in September and infects the Ultraverse in October's *Rune* #1!

SIREN™

Ex-UltraForce thief Siren spins into the Marvel Universe during Black September's *Siren* #∞ and heads up a hunt for War Machine when *Siren* #1 launches in October!



ULTRAFORCE™

September Variant Cover
The Ultraverse's greatest heroes. Black Knight heads up UltraForce during the reality-bending Black September. And during the New World Order he leads them into a new series. *UltraForce* #1 launches in October.

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ULTRAVERSE®

Big Changes at MALIBU

Malibu founders and vice presidents Tom Mason (VP-Marketing) and Chris Ulm (VP-Editorial) announced on June 28 that they will be leaving their positions as of Sept. 8. They will be starting their own entertainment-related venture which will include, but not be limited to, the production of comic books.

Mason and Ulm will not announce details of their new enterprise until Sept. 9, but said that they were looking forward to trying new things.

"We've been doing the same thing for the same company for a decade," Mason observed. "We're not looking to duplicate past successes. At Malibu, we developed skills and knowledge, and now it's time to put those to use for our own benefit. We want to live the dream."

Ulm agreed. "The downturn in the comics industry is not mirrored by a downturn in the entertainment field as a whole. It would be a mistake to assume that we're just going to continue along the same lines. The direct market is tearing itself apart. Sometimes you have to turn the world upside down."

Ulm and Mason are particularly enthusiastic about their new offices, which are close to the beach. "Sometimes you just have to take your shoes off and run your toes through the sand," Mason said, with a laugh. "We're hands-on people, not suit-and-tie types. We're anxious to roll up our sleeves again and dive in."

Ulm and Mason's departure follows close on the heels of former publisher Dave Olbrich, who was dismissed earlier this year. Also leaving will be Senior Editor Dan Danko, who is resigning as of the end of August. All these changes occurred in the aftermath of Marvel's purchase of Malibu in November 1994.

In other Malibu news, President Scott Rosenberg announced that, bucking the industry-wide trend of rising prices, the cost of Malibu's Ultraverse titles will be lowered from $2.50 to $1.50 beginning with the "Infinity" issues of *Black September* and continuing through the relaunch of seven titles the following month. Of the original Ultraverse titles, only *Prime*, *Mantra* and *The Night Man* are continuing. ■ *Paul J. Grant*

MARVEL Shoots for the Stars

With all the relaunches going on at Marvel, one of them had to lead to outer space. The Big M is pushing its cosmic comics in October, with George Pérez taking over the writing chores on *Silver Surfer*, and the launch of a brand new *Captain Marvel* series as well as two limited series: *Star Masters* and *Lunatik*.

Pérez starts as writer of *Silver Surfer* with #111, with artist Tom Grindberg now working on full-bleed pages.

"I had certain ground rules and George had no problems with them," said Mark Gruenwald, editor-in-chief of the Marvel Heroes family, which includes the cosmic books and Avengers-related titles. "One: no Galactus. Two: no Thanos. Three: no other heralds. Four: no Zenn-La. I wanted one year without all of these things.

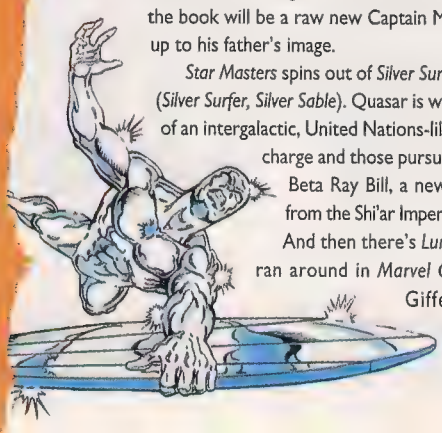
"The Silver Surfer has been living in an awfully narrow neck of space. I don't run into as many of the same people on the streets of *Manhattan* as he does in outer space."

Pérez, who will also write the Surfer in *Cosmic Powers Unlimited*, hopes to double the fun. "The Silver Surfer is going to the end of the universe, to a place so remote even the Watchers haven't been there. There will be a totally new supporting cast," Pérez said.

"At the same time, through a story contrivance [in *Silver Surfer* #111-#112], there will be a Silver Surfer on this side of the universe who is the same—but separate—that will be appearing in *Cosmic Powers Unlimited* and the Marvel crossovers. The split will have ramifications down the line."

Bolstering the lineup is *Captain Marvel*, written by Fabian Nicieza and drawn by Ed Benes, an artist from *Avengers* artist Mike Deodato's studio. Nicieza said the theme of the book will be a raw new Captain Marvel, the former Legacy, trying to live up to his father's image.

Star Masters spins out of *Silver Surfer* and is by Gruenwald and Scot Eaton (*Silver Surfer, Silver Sable*). Quasar is wrongly accused of murdering emissaries of an intergalactic, United Nations-like organization. As he seeks to fight the charge and those pursuing him, he is joined by a team including Beta Ray Bill, a new Skrull, a member of Gladiator's race from the Shi'ar Imperial Guard and a Rigelian named Tana Rile. And then there's *Lunatik*, featuring the bounty hunter who ran around in *Marvel Comics Presents* #173-#176, by Keith Giffen, Lovern Kindierski and Duncan Roule. ■ *Rob Allstetter*



company updates

COMICS

Due out in November from Byron Preiss Multimedia and Boulevard Books is *The Ultimate Silver Surfer*, which contains prose short stories as well as illustrations. Stories are by Stan Lee, Len Wein, Tom DeFalco and others; illustrations are by George Pérez, John Buscema, Mike Zeck, Gary Frank, Paul Ryan, Scott McDaniel, Amanda Conner, Colleen Doran and others. Also appearing in November in book form is the novel *Fantastic Four: To Free Atlantis* by Nancy Collins, with illustrations by current FF comic artist Paul Ryan. Future novels spotlight characters including the X-Men, Daredevil and Spider-Man.

MILESTONE MEDIA

Taking over *Hardware* in September is the new creative team of writer John Rozum and artists Eric Battle and John Stanisci. Their first issue is #33, in which Hardware deals with a superpowered cyborg.... Look for the new title *Heroes* in November, in which new members like Payback and Starlight join the team formed by several ex-members of Shadow Cabinet.

TEKNO•COMIX

Who says fans don't have a say? This September, in *Mr. Hero* #11, you'll see Mr. Hero don the winning armor (either Victorian or modern) as voted by all you readers.... You'll be able to go online with BIG Entertainment when the Tekno•Comix Forum opens on August 24 on The Microsoft Network. To celebrate, Primortals creator Leonard Nimoy will be online, ready to chat on September 1 at 9 p.m.

TOPPS COMICS

In October, two issues of *X-Files* ship: #10 and #11. Both will be done by series regulars Stefan Petrucha, Charles Adlard and Mirae Kim.

WARP GRAPHICS

October sees the release of two new mini-series. The six-issue *Elfquest: Kahvi* sees the title character and her bat-winged lover Tyldak discover an odd mentor who takes them on a journey halfway 'round the world. *Elfquest: Two-Spear* is a five-issue series telling the tale of one of the most secretive chiefs who almost destroyed everything that the elves had.... October happens to be "Elfquest Nostalgia Month," and to celebrate, all books shipping that month will be in black-and-white with a reduced cover price.

SMALL PRESS OUTTAKES

Blazer Unlimited + *Retro Dead* #1, featuring an assortment of cool vampires, werewolves and zombies, ships in October.... **Bishop Press**' *Rose & Gunn: Creator's Choice* #1, shipping in September, presents special pin-ups of characters Rose, Gunn and Sade by artists from Image, Chaos!, London Night and Malibu, plus a reprint of Rose & Gunn's first story and a brand-new Sade tale.... In September, **Samson Comics** will release *Bloodbath* #1, beginning a new, ongoing monthly title featuring the work of artist/writer Jamie Biggs. The $2.50 issue, which debuts the mysterious title character, has a cover by Kevin Conrad, who inked Image's *Spawn: Blood Feud*.... In September, **Patchwork Press** offers up more madcap mayhem with *The Little OZ Squad*, a Vertigo-style comic for kids. The $2.75 one-shot features the characters from OZ Squad as children. W

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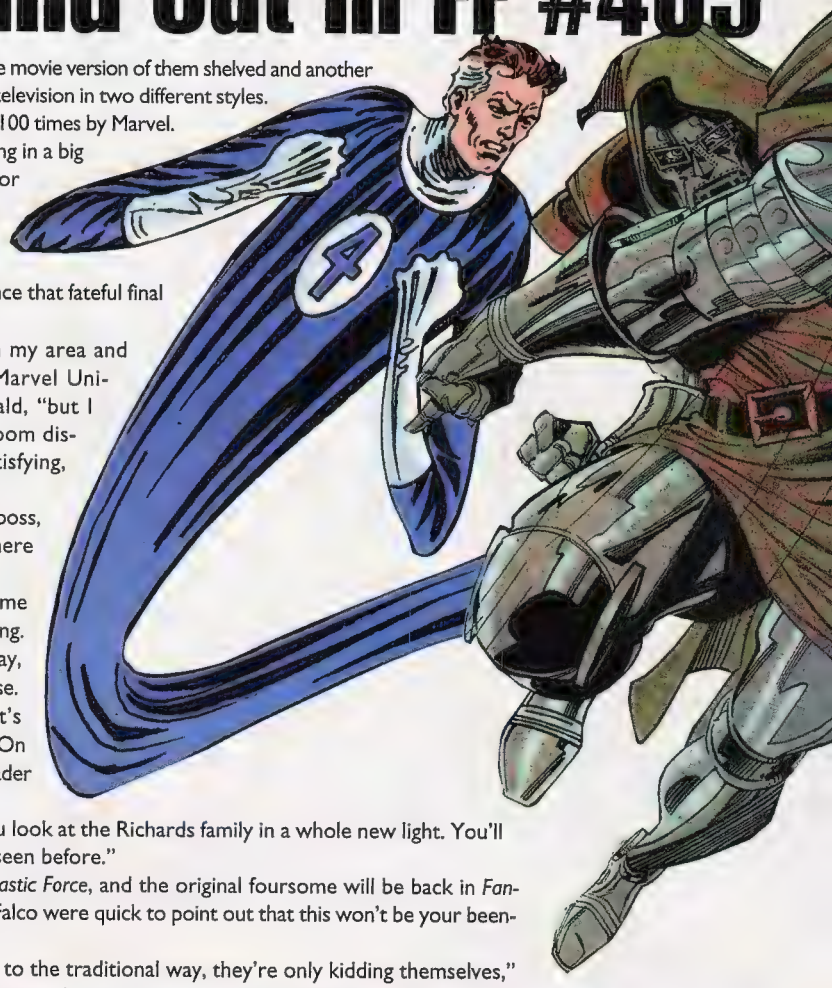
Where Have Reed and Doom Been? Find Out in FF #405



They've been gone long enough to see one movie version of them shelved and another started. Long enough to be animated on television in two different styles. Long enough to be called "dead" at least 100 times by Marvel.

Now, nearly two years after vanishing in a big puff of smoke, Mr. Fantastic and Doctor Doom are returning to the pages of *Fantastic Four*. A story running in *Fantastic Four* #405-408 will shed light on where the old adversaries have been since that fateful final panel in *Fantastic Four* #381.

"It's one of the top two books in my area and I'm not going to mess with it said Marvel Universe Editor-in-Chief Mark Gruenwald, "but I did want a resolution of the Reed/Doom disappearance and I wanted it to be satisfying, important and unexpected."

Neither Gruenwald nor his former boss, *FF* writer Tom DeFalco would say where Reed and Doom have been.

"Reed has been through...heck. Same goes for Doom," said DeFalco, chuckling. "One was tortured and taunted every day, and the other one was treated even worse. Somebody else has been behind it. It's someone who hasn't been seen before. On the other hand, when revealed, every reader will know who it is."

Added Gruenwald: "It will make you look at the Richards family in a whole new light. You'll also see a side of Doom you've never seen before."

Johnny Storm will return from *Fantastic Force*, and the original foursome will be back in *Fantastic Four* #408. But Gruenwald and DeFalco were quick to point out that this won't be your been-there, done-that FF.

"If anybody thinks we're going back to the traditional way, they're only kidding themselves," DeFalco said. "It won't resemble anything you've seen before." ■ *Rob Allstetter*

FORMER PENTHOUSE COMIX EDITOR LEAPS TO DEATH

George S. Carragonne, the 31-year-old former Editor-in-Chief and head writer of *Penthouse Comix* and *Men's Adventure Comics*, committed suicide on July 20, 1995. He jumped from the 45th floor balcony of the Marriott Marquis Hotel in New York City's Times Square.

At about 2:30 p.m. on July 20, Carragonne entered the hotel and asked a bellhop if it was the highest building in the area. When told it was, Carragonne took a glass-walled elevator to the top. A hotel maid shouted "Get off of there!" when she saw Carragonne scale the balcony in full view of several witnesses. He ignored her and plunged to his death, 500 feet below.

Carragonne left no suicide note. He had been relieved of his responsibilities at *Penthouse* within the preceding week, according to Acting Editor-in-Chief Mark McClellan.

Penthouse publisher Bob Guccione expressed regret about the incident.

"We are deeply saddened at this tragic loss of a genuinely talented man," he said in a press release. "Over the past two years Kathy [Guccione's wife and partner] and I had come to admire George's wit and his drive for creative excellence. We extend our sympathy to his family and friends."

Carragonne's pre-*Penthouse* credits include work for both Marvel and Valiant. He spent the last two years at *Penthouse* helping to launch their comics line and co-writing such strips as "Action Figures" and "Bethlehem Steele." ■ *Paul J. Grant*

IMAGE, DARK HORSE and ACCLAIM Go Exclusive with DIAMOND

Diamond Comics Distributors announced in late July, agreements with Dark Horse Comics, Image Comics and Acclaim Comics to act as those publishers' exclusive agent to distribute comics in the direct market. The deals, like those Diamond has with DC Comics, entail Dark Horse and Image selling directly to retailers, with Diamond receiving a fee to handle the distribution duties. That differs from the previous system, in which the distributor bought the comics from the publisher and then resold them to the retailers. Specific details on Acclaim's deal with Diamond were unknown as *Wizard* went to press.

With Marvel handling its own distribution through its Heroes World subsidiary, the continued viability of Capital City Distribution comes into question.

Dark Horse Comics will begin being available only through Diamond in November; the Image deal goes into effect in December. As for Acclaim, look for more information next month. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

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by Paul Dini, Ty Templeton and Rick Burchett

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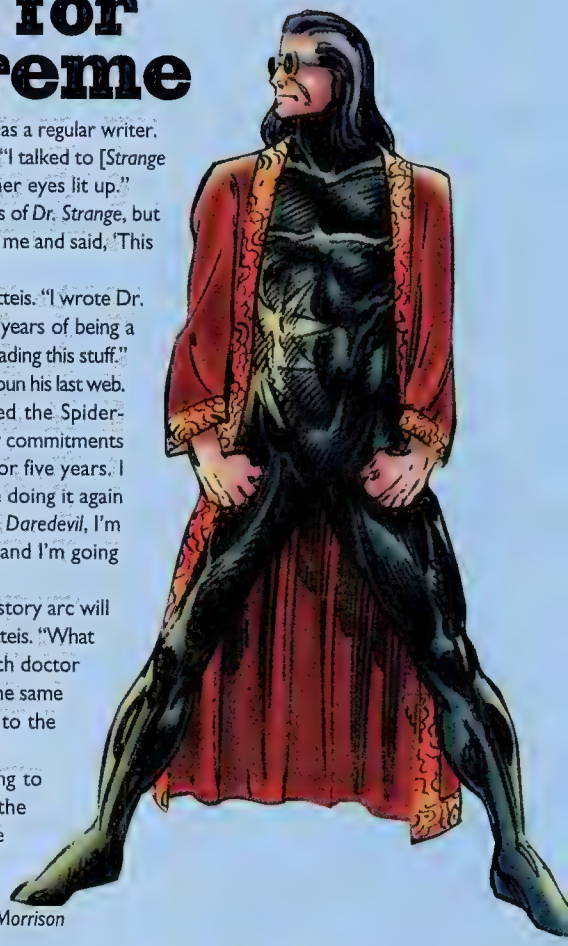
Back to Basics for Sorcerer Supreme



Something strange has happened to Marvel's *Dr. Strange*: The book finally has a regular writer.

"When I heard *Dr. Strange* was available," said writer J.M. DeMatteis, "I talked to [*Strange* editor] Bobbie Chase about it. I said I was interested in the book and her eyes lit up."

"That's about right," laughed Chase. "Warren Ellis wrote three issues of *Dr. Strange*, but we needed a regular writer. I love J.M.'s writing; it's so solid. He came to me and said, 'This is a character I was born to write.'"

"Dr. Strange is a Marvel character I have a real passion for," said DeMatteis. "I wrote Dr. Strange years ago, when he was in *The Defenders*. It's nice after all these years of being a jaded professional to find a character that can excite me as much as a kid reading this stuff."

Unfortunately for fans of his work on Spider-Man, DeMatteis said he has spun his last web.

"I have just written my last issue of *Amazing Spider-Man*. I finished the Spider-Man/Batman crossover and *The Lost Years* mini-series. This concludes my commitments to the Spider-Man office. I had a great time, but I have been doing it for five years. I could see myself coming back for a special project, but I could not see doing it again on a monthly basis. I'm just burned out on Spider-Man. I've taken over *Daredevil*, I'm going to be doing a monthly DC Vertigo title I created called *Seekers* and I'm going to be doing *Dr. Strange*."

So what yarns will DeMatteis be spinning for *Dr. Strange*? "The first story arc will go back to the roots, to the original elements of the character," said DeMatteis. "What they tossed up 20 years ago was an amazing story. Dr. Strange was a rich doctor who lost it all. What turned him into this selfish, arrogant alcoholic? At the same time, what was there in this man that allowed Dr. Strange to open up to the Ancient One as his spiritual master and lead him into a new path?"

He's also looking at Strange's nemesis, Baron Mordo. "We're going to look at what it was like for Mordo, previously the 'first disciple' of the Ancient One, to have this western upstart come and snatch that title away from him.

"We're going *all* the way back," DeMatteis continued. "We're going back to Dr. Strange's childhood, to see how it all began." ■ *Ruth Morrison*

MIRAGE DROPS COMICS LINE

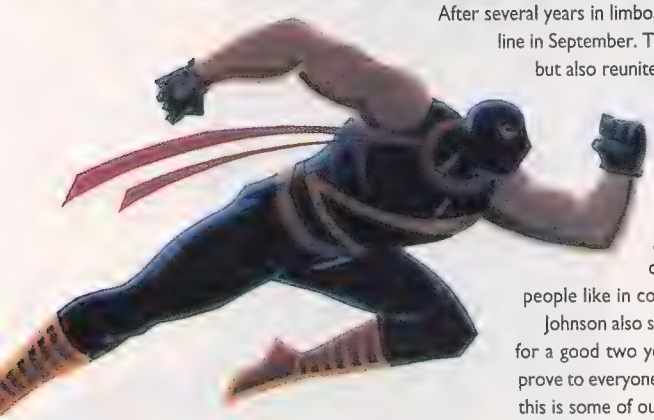
Mirage Studios, publisher of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, will cease publishing comics by the end of 1995. According to Gary Richardson, director of finance and operations, "Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird want to devote their energies to other aspects of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles empire, namely possible live-action television and movie developments. The financial risk necessary in order to make Mirage Publishing a larger operation was too great, given the state of the market at this particular time. Staying at the size we are, which is quite small, just didn't make any financial sense either."

The last two books scheduled to appear under the Mirage Publishing imprint, according to Richardson, are *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #12 and *Usagi Yojimbo* #13. Both will be solicited in August for publication in late October or early November. There are two other titles affected by the cancellation. The five-issue *Casey Jones & Raphael* mini-series by Eastman and Simon Bisley, of which only one volume has appeared, will be re-solicited in book format for release in early 1996. Also, the rights to *Construct*, a six-issue mini-series of which four issues were solicited but none published, have been returned to creators Paul Jenkins and Leo Duranona.

The Turtles have been involved in crossovers with Erik Larsen's Savage Dragon on two occasions and there may be more to come. "There is still the possibility of a Turtles crossover story which we will be doing with another publisher later on," Richardson said, "but there's nothing signed yet and I'm not at liberty to release any details."

Richardson pointed out that "fans of the Turtles can still find their adventures in the ongoing newspaper strip and in *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Adventures*, published by Archie Comics under a license from Mirage. And the publishing company will continue to exist as a corporate entity, retaining all the copyrights to the material should some publisher in this country or internationally want to purchase the rights to republish any of the old comics." ■ *Jack Curtin*

Making Their Mark



After several years in limbo, Dark Horse Comics' *The Mark* returns as part of the Dark Horse Heroes line in September. The four-issue mini-series not only unites The Mark with other superheroes, but also reunites the *Tribe* creative team of Todd Johnson and Larry Stroman.

"Working on *The Mark* with Larry was sort of a mutual thing," Johnson explained. "We were each talking to Dark Horse about various projects, and Mike Richardson asked us if we'd like to work together again on a new *Mark* series. It just kind of came about.

"Larry was the original designer of The Mark, so you know we're not going to reject what happened before. He's back in New York, with lots of fast-paced action, lots of surprises and lots of humor. It's everything people like in comics."

Johnson also sees *The Mark* as a warm-up series of sorts: "We've both been out of comics for a good two years now; if you're a boxer, you don't jump back in the ring. We want to prove to everyone that we can put out a monthly book and deliver the goods. At the same time, this is some of our best work—I'm proud of the story, and this is Larry Stroman's finest artwork to date. *The Mark* is our way of letting everyone know that Johnson and Stroman are back." ■ *Greg McElhatton*

Eisner Award Winners

Here are several winners of the 1995 Eisner Awards, presented during the San Diego Comic-Con on July 28, 1995.

Best Continuing Series and Best Humor Publication: **Bone, by Jeff Smith**
Best New Series: ***Too Much Coffee Man*, by Shannon Wheeler**
Best Limited Series: ***Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*, by Frank Miller**
Best Anthology: ***Big Book of Urban Legends*, edited by Andy Helfer and Bronwyn Taggart**
Best Writer: **Alan Moore, *From Hell***
Best Penciler/Inker: **Dave Gibbons, *Martha Washington Goes to War***
Best Painter: **Jon J. Muth, *The Mystery Play***
Best Writer/Artist: **Mike Mignola, *Hellboy***
Best Writer/Artist, Humor: **Jeff Smith, *Bone***
Best Cover Artist: **Glenn Fabry, *Hellblazer***
Best Editor: **Karen Berger, DC/Vertigo**
Best Single Issue: ***Batman Adventures Holiday Special*, by Paul Dini, Bruce Timm and others**
Best Short Story: **"The Babe Wore Red," by Frank Miller**
Best Archival Collection: ***The Christmas Spirit*, by Will Eisner**
Best Publication Design: ***The Acme Novelty Library*, by Chris Ware**
Talent Deserving of Wider Recognition: **Evan Dorkin, *Milk & Cheese***

Boris Boosts Midnight Press

Midnight Press' first title, *Alister the Slayer*, makes its debut in grand style in August with a cover by famed fantasy painter Boris Vallejo.

Issues #2 and #3 continue the high-profile appearances, featuring covers by John Bolton and Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti.

The artists' participation came via Top Dog Marketing of Chapel Hill, N.C., a public relations firm that Midnight Press hired to help promote its books and locate cover talent. The firm counts the SkyBox trading-card company among its long-time clients. "It was Top Dog's contacts with the artists that made the connection," said Janice Daughtry of Top Dog. "But once they saw the book, they didn't need any convincing."

The comic focuses on an immortal who is trying to regain his mortality.

Three issues of the bimonthly, $2.50 book were in the can by early July, and all three will be solicited as returnable, said publisher Alex Hambry, who created the character and is co-plotting with Trey Berryman. Craig Robinson is the artist, while Troy Hocking provides computer coloring. ■ *Craig Shutt*

Tick creator Ben Edlund talks about the trials of getting his creation to TV,

being a chick magnet and how The Tick is NOT a ripoff

GONE BUGGY

WHEN BEN EDLUND CRACKS, HE CRACKS BIG TIME.

"I was working on *The Tick* seven days a week," reflects The Tick's creator on the insanity of bringing his comic book creation to the TV airwaves on FOX, "and I started to go pretty insane. After about three months I became convinced that every time I flushed the toilet, it was saying 'I love you.' I was pretty sure I was hallucinating but I didn't feel like I had gone completely over the edge."

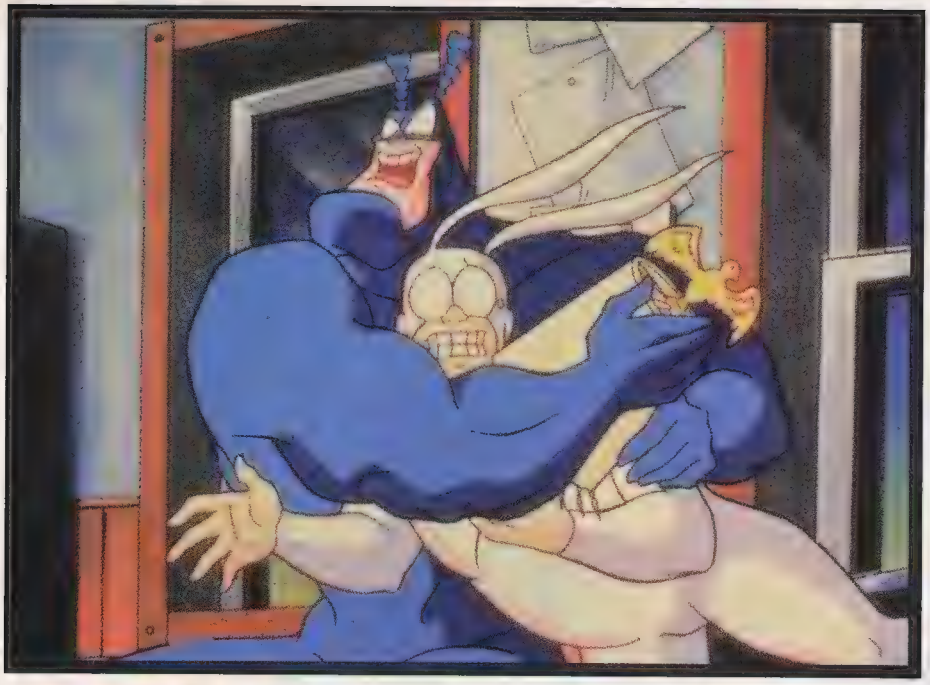
You get a lot of this kind of matter-of-fact honesty with Edlund. Much like his creation, Edlund comes across as naïve and innocent; a kind of Tick in flesh and blood. Ask a simple question, like 'Would you like to be The Tick when you grow up?' and out of Edlund's mouth comes more insight into his mind than you almost feel comfortable dealing with.

"I don't think I'd want to be The Tick because a lot of the things he's got going on, I've got going on," says Edlund spilling his guts. "We both have the will to escape reality and the inability to form long-term relationships. In a way, I would like The Tick to be a chick magnet for me but I'm really bad at all that."

Edlund is about to get off the couch when the urge to relate his paranoia on The Tick's big rise to television wells up inside of him. "I didn't know anybody was actually reading *The Tick* comic until the third issue came out," says Edlund about his New England Comics series. "Selling The Tick to FOX was so much of a shock that, until I started seeing the animated tests coming back from Korea, I was convinced that the whole thing was an elaborate hoax on the part of FOX."

Photo: Harry Peterson

BY MARC SHAPIRO



The Fox Kid's cartoon Tick (left) has remained true to the original (bottom).

OPEN SEASON

These days Edlund, who claims to be "100 percent 26 years old," is having a little less of a problem believing. The first season of his cartoon baby has come and quite successfully gone, despite it being delayed by a full year for reasons undisclosed. Edlund and his cast of television behind-the-scenes types are two scripts away from completing the second season's batch of 13 scripts that will, hopefully, begin airing sometime in the fall.

"If the new shows start airing in September or October I will be very happy," he says with guarded optimism. "But the truth is that this show has always been behind schedule. So I've got my fingers crossed."

Edlund, by his own estimation, is on the horns of a very enviable dilemma. The Tick has been a ratings monster that has spawned toys, videos and all manner of outrageous merchandising. And it has catapulted its obscure creator, whose eye is ultimately on a filmmaking career, into the limelight. "The Tick has gone from something very personal to something that belongs to everybody and, in a way, that's tough for me to relate to. I used to have complete control. Now there's a hundred hands all over The Tick. But there's also a whole lot of upside, so I really can't complain."

One of the things Edlund is not complaining about is the extreme popularity of The Tick and the reasons behind his character's success. "The Tick is a really good-natured character. He's willing to fight but he's not inclined toward violence. He has a love for drama and a need for events. And I think that's something everybody can identify with.

"I created The Tick with the idea that he would be totally open, programmable and suggestible. He's basically this clean slate that pop culture painted itself onto."

The creator, who has gotten pretty used to people comparing his Tick to Dave Sim's *Cerebus* character called The Roach, doesn't let the comparison get to him. "I've always thought of The Tick as being much more similar to Don Simpson's Megaton Man than The Roach," says Edlund for the defense.

"Certainly there's this thematic thing going on between The Tick and The Roach. There are definitely some similarities, but I would say they are subliminal at best. I don't think The Tick is any more derivative than anything that came before it. I'm not defensive about the comparison. In fact, it doesn't bother me at all."

Nor does it bother Roach creator Dave Sim who says, "I don't think the comparison is valid. Ben's put enough new spins on the archetype. It's always been about how big we can get the chest and arms, how small we can make the head and how stupid we can make him. A few people think I should sue the guy, but I've been using Groucho Marx as a model [for the *Cerebus* character Lord Julius] since the '70s so to get upset at Ben would be a bit hypocritical."

BIRTH OF THE TICK

Edlund was born and raised in Massachusetts where an early inclination to draw helped him avoid the trial by torture that awaits most kids traveling a different path. "I got pretty good at drawing fairly early and that put me into a kind of social protective sphere," says Edlund. "I was the art kid so nobody was going to break my hands. I used to fight a lot in elementary school but then I started to get beat up so I stopped fighting."

But it was not the artist in Edlund that was responsible for the creation of his unorthodox crimefighter. "It was my senior year in high school. One day, out of the blue, I called one of my friends a tick. I liked the idea of a character called The Tick and just kept running with the idea of this wacked-out character. Eventually the character just began to take on a life of its own."

By the time Edlund graduated from high school, he had already begun dealing with New England Comics which had taken a liking to a few preliminary Tick sketches. The publisher then asked Edlund to come up with a couple of quick two-page Tick stories that would grace *New England Comics Newsletter* #14 and #15. Edlund recalls that those first appearances of The Tick bare little resemblance to the current incarnation. "My first vision of The Tick was totally wigged out and strange," he laughingly recalls. "He only spoke French, he was in a mental institution and he was very violent. He was also very furry looking. It was like he was wearing a gorilla suit."

JUSTICE IS ETERNAL. IT'S JUST THE WEAPONS THAT CHANGE.

ETERNAL WARRIOR. IN SEPTEMBER.

47 & 48: DESERT JYHAD. ETERNAL WARRIOR VS. TERRORISTS.
BY JOHN OSTRANDER AND JACKSON GUICE.

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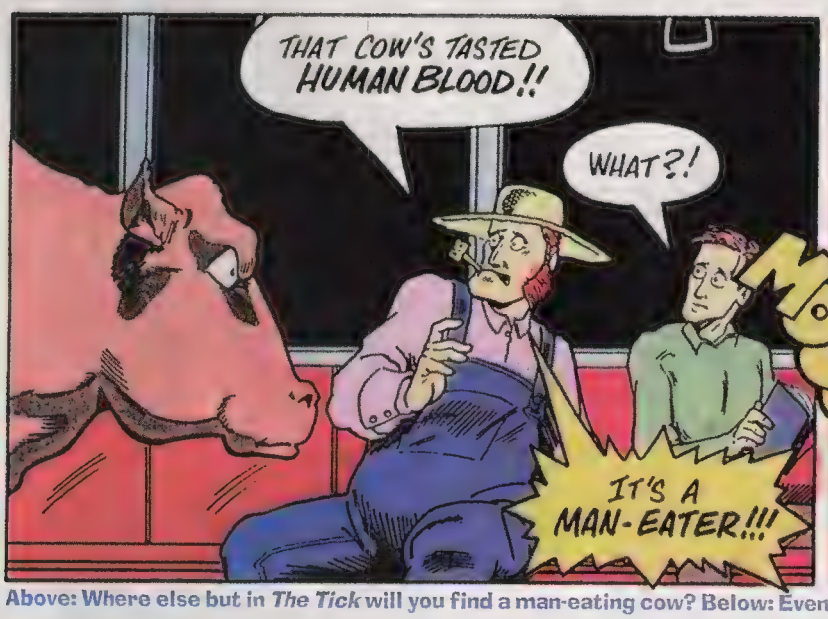

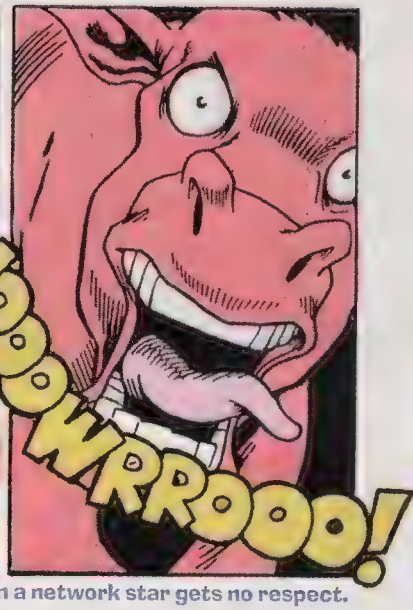

Above: Where else but in *The Tick* will you find a man-eating cow? Below: Even a network star gets no respect.

Edlund matriculated to the Massachusetts College of Art, secure in the knowledge that nothing but a little exposure would come of these two Tick quickies. But the response turned out to be better than anybody expected and so the ink had hardly dried on his class schedule when he received a call from the folks at New England with the offer to bankroll a Tick comic book. "At that point I was really casual about comic books. It took me a year and a half to do the first Tick book. I was notorious for wanting to do things at my own speed and not really giving a damn about deadlines. Consequently, it took me five years to do 12 issues of the book. But I didn't get too much heat because the readership was high."

As was interest in bringing Edlund's superhero to the television screen as a Saturday Morning children's show. In April 1993, a deal was struck with FOX, which forced Edlund into the wonderful world of compromise that is television.

TOUGH LESSONS

"There's a lot of compromise involved in trying to put something on mainstream children's television," he says of the lesson learned first. "Bringing The Tick to television was tough for a number of reasons. The structure of the comic was always what you would consider lackadaisical and the action did not always revolve around the plot. Once in a while the book would make a joke about the homosexual undertones of the superhero. There were also a lot of dark elements that needed to be lightened up. For a while we had some TV executives and Standards and Practices people pretty nervous."

One of those darker elements include a grittier Man-Eating Cow that actually ate humans instead of licking faces in the cuter cartoon version. Other characters from the comic, like Chainsaw Vigilante and Hand Grenade Man, didn't make the cartoon because of their inappropriate penchant for violence. "But the show has ended up being a pretty good take on the comic book," he says.

Thanks to the fact that Edlund, to a large extent, is running the show. "I'm lucky that, as one of the story editors and writers on the show, I've been able to exert quite a bit of influence in keeping the character as consistent as possible. My partner [Richard Liebman Smith] and I come up with the story ideas and either write the script ourselves or give them to another writer. That writer, in turn, writes an outline that we monitor, then they bring it to script and we end up doing extensive rewrites."

And even though New England is continuing to put out Tick books, don't look for any Edlund issues in the near future.

"Doing another Tick book is so far from where I'm at right now," he says, "but I'd love to finish the story I started with issue #12 because it was left as this sort of ridiculous cliffhanger. I had planned on doing #13 immediately after #12 but fortunately, or unfortunately, The Tick sold to FOX at that point."

Edlund has often been tempted to try a more mainstream character and he claims that he "occasionally gets a call from somebody with an offer."

"But it's a well-known fact that I like to do things at my own speed and so I'm not going to be the first person somebody calls to do a high profile, superhero series. That's just a fact."

If the truth be known, Edlund seems almost instinctively shy about approaching anything mainstream. "Would I try to create another mainstream character? I don't know. If I did and I was successful with it, I know basically what would happen. I know the course of events that would ensue. Why do it again?" W

Marc Shapiro, whose book about the band The Eagles called The Long Run *is available this September from Omnibus Press.*

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Wizard casts the Spawn movie!

Casting Call 8

Yeah, yeah, we know there's supposedly some sorta Spawn movie coming out in the future, but you know how Hollywood is. And you also know how long it usually takes for those Image guys to finally get something going. Anyway, we *Wizard* folks tossed around the ol' Hollywood Ball and came up with our own ideas of who'd play whom in a live-action Spawn movie. Our hellish picture would be directed by John Carpenter (*Village of the Damned*, *The Fog* and *Halloween*), with ILM, of course, handling all the funky FX. Heck, maybe we'll even get Jim Henson's Creature Shop to help out with some o' the freakish costumes. Now, onward to our stars...

AL SIMMONS/SPAWN

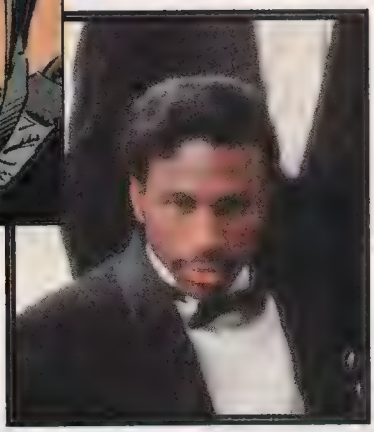
Ol' Spawny Guy's gotta be one tough-lookin' customer who knows how to throw some bad guys around. Mario Van Peebles (*New Jack City*, *Highlander 3*) is most definitely our man.

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

All photos: Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.

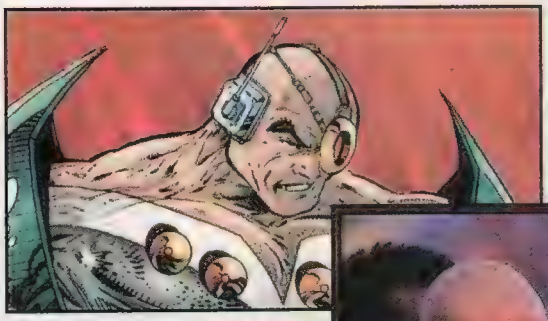
WANDA BLAKE

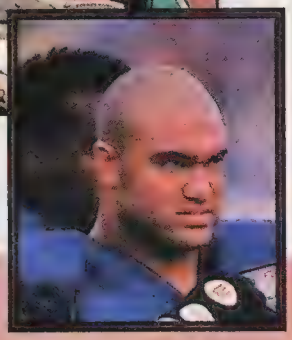
Al's former wife and major babe would be quite excellently played by that vixen Halle Berry from *The Flintstones* and *Boomerang*.



TERRY FITZGERALD

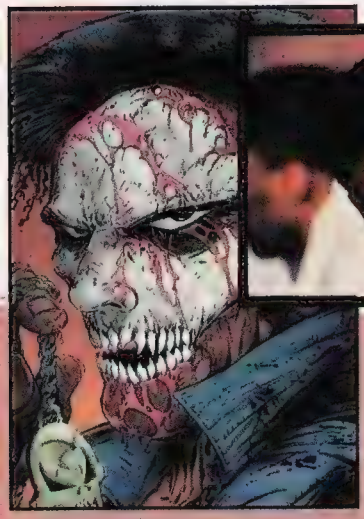
Leon (yeah, just Leon) from *Above the Rim* would do a pretty good job of playing Spawn's wife-stealin' ex-buddy.





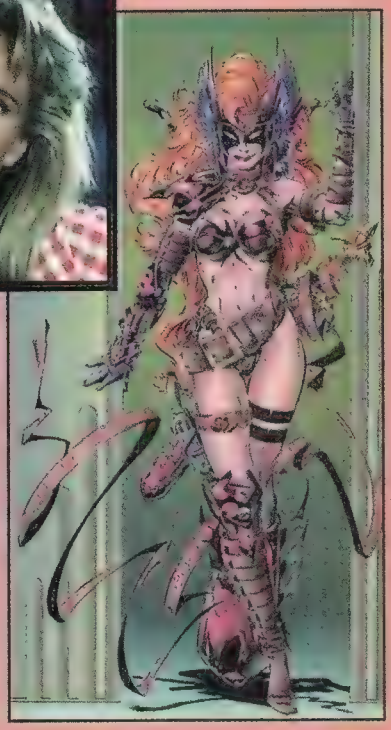
OVERTKILL

Chris Zorich of the Chicago Bears is perfect for this mob-manufactured goon. Hey, his friggin' neck's the size of our office building!



CHAPEL

Bringing his bulk from the New York Giants, Lawrence Taylor would play the man who killed Al Simmons, and like it!



ANGELA

Kelly Lynch (*Roadhouse*, *Curly Sue*) would knock yer socks off as the chick Spawn loves to hate.

VIOLATOR/CLOWN

Grandpa Al Lewis is a shoo-in for the nastiest clown this side of Bozo. You'll remember him from numerous Howard Stern appearances, "The Richard Bey Show" and as the guy who kept Herman in line on "The Munsters."

MALEBOLGIA

Jeremy Irons (*The Lion King*, *Reversal of Fortune*) will use that chilling voice o' his to bring this incarnation of evil to life.

TONY TWIST

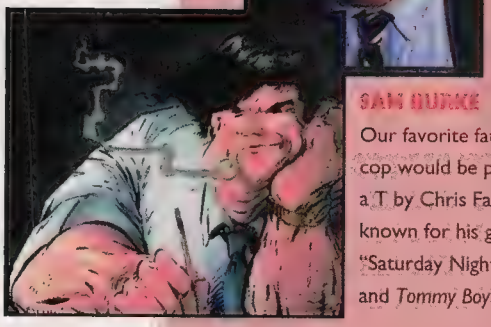
Hailing from *Goodfellas* and *The Rocketeer*, Paul Sorvino would be perfect for this small-time mafia don and big-time scumbag.

TWITCH WILLIAMS

Michael Jeter ("Evening Shade") is more than skinny enough to handle playing the other cop in Spawnville.

JASON WYNN

As for the devious Supreme Director of U.S. Intelligence Agencies, John Rhys-Davies—from the first and last Indiana Jones movies and the TV show *Sliders*—would be handling that.

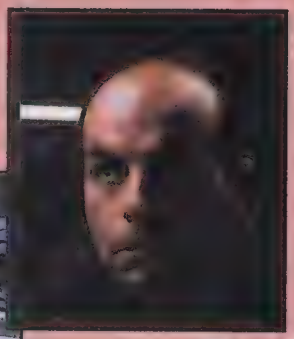


SAM BURKE

Our favorite fat slob of a cop would be played to a T by Chris Farley, known for his girth on "Saturday Night Live" and *Tommy Boy*.

ANTI-SPAWN/REDEEMER

And finally, Michael Ironside, from *Top Gun* and *Total Recall*, would splendidly voice Spawnie Guy's only true supervillain. Hey, besides Spawn, he's the only one with a cape!



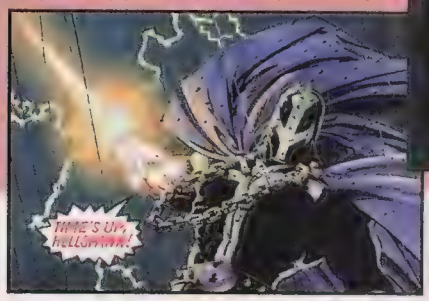


PHOTO BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

GAREB

Well, we wanted to get our own Gareb Shamus to play the bum in the alley, but we feel his twin brother Bill Maher from Comedy Central's "Politically Incorrect" would be better.

And there ya have it! Just try an' tell us that movie wouldn't kick some major ass! Now hopefully Hollywood'll move its tail and use some of our suggestions for its version of a Spawn movie. And we'd be partly responsible for a definite box-office smash.

The Wizard staff wonders if anyone friggin' noticed that Tia Carrere was NOT used in this Casting Call.

WANTED

FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF KRYPTON!

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BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER

Superman: The Man of Steel #50-#52 Superman #106-#108
Adventures of Superman #529-#530 Action Comics #716-#717
Superman: The Man of Tomorrow #3

OUCH!

Red Sonja: Scavenger hunt

THE SHE-DEVIL WITH A SWORD GETS NEW LIFE IN AN OCTOBER ONE-SHOT

"The tiny chain-mail bikini was just too ridiculous," says Editor-in-Chief Carl Potts, about Marvel's revamp of its original Bad Girl, Red Sonja. "The new version has nice, sensuous elements, but it will be different from what's been seen before."

The '90s version of Red Sonja makes its debut in *Red Sonja: Scavenger Hunt*, a 48-page one-shot due in October.

"We're doing this to test the waters," says Potts. "If it goes over well, and we hope it does, we'll do more stories down the road. We've already got feelers out to a number of popular creators who would like to work with us on Red Sonja stories."

The updated version of the red-tressed heroine will get an interest boost from the current Bad Girl craze. But Potts believes there's more to *Scavenger Hunt*'s cast of Bad Girls than others in the category can match. "One thing we wanted to do was show that not every warrior woman has to have the same body type," he says. To that end, the foxy ladies starring in this tale include those who sport petite, stocky and other shapely figures. "We wanted to be more diverse than the supermodel type you see everywhere."

Written by Glenn Herdling (*Fantastic Four: Atlantis Rising*), with art by Ken Lashley (*Excalibur*) and Harry Candelario (*X-Men 2099*), *Scavenger Hunt*'s plot focuses on a group of four female warriors from very different and often warring tribes—a Pict (forest dweller), an Aquilonian (Nordic blonde), a Kushite (African) and a Khitan (Asian)—in a quest for a mystic set of armor. By the time Red Sonja joins in, most of the armor has been recovered. However, it's spread among the women, so they must team up and compete with each other to gain the total prize.

Lackey believes that *Scavenger Hunt*—which continues the revitalization of Marvel's Conan line that began with two new Conan comic titles in June—has the right formula to succeed. "My whole take on Red Sonja, and the Conan characters in general, is to inject a ton of fun while being sincere with them. The goal is to offer something new for new fans while infusing some of the old elements that long-time readers have enjoyed." W

BY CRAIG SHUTT

VITAL STATS

WHO:
Red Sonja

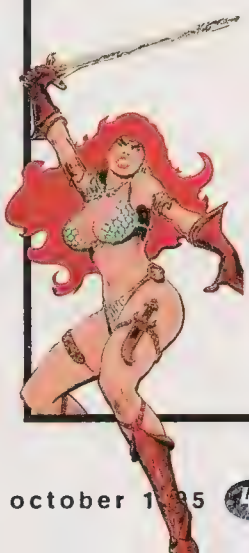
WHAT:
Marvel's original Bad Girl, based on a character by Conan creator Robert E. Howard

DEBUT:
Conan the Barbarian #23, 1972

MAIN APPEARANCES:
Three solo titles featuring the character (1977-79, 1983, 1983-86), all entitled *Red Sonja*; *Marvel Feature* (1975-76); also a feature film based on the character called *Red Sonja*, starring Brigitte Nielsen and Arnold Schwarzenegger and adapted into a 1985 comic series

WHAT'S THE DEAL?:
The "She-Devil with a Sword" acts as Conan's perennial non-lover, since she will only love a man who bests her in swordplay. Not wanting to fight her and possibly kill her just to gain her love, Conan settles for a purely platonic relationship with sexual tension thick enough to cut with a battle ax. But can he be as patient as he is powerful?

Craig Shutt, who wrote "How to Sell Yourself" in Wizard *#49, truly wants to wear an iron bikini. But, man, those things can really chafe.*



PAUL SMITH may be the most famous artist you've never heard of. Then again, you may be one of those fans who wonders why this talented artist of acclaimed work on *The Uncanny X-Men*, *X-Men/Alpha Flight* and *The Golden Age* doesn't have more regular work available. Or maybe you think he's kicked the bucket.

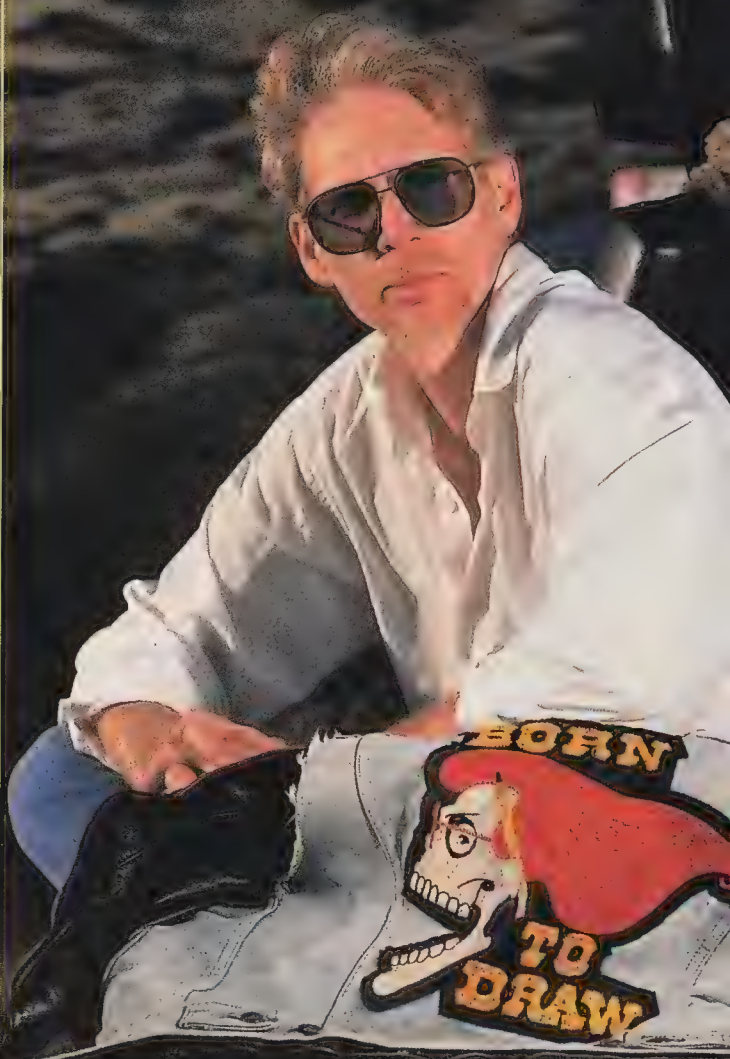
"There's this theory that Paul Is Dead," Smith admits, "that I'm lying in a ditch underneath the twisted wreckage of my burning motorcycle outside of Provo, Utah, or something." Rest assured, the rumor is false. When asked, Smith bluntly admits the truth to why he can lay claim to the title of Best Artist Overlooked by Fans and Pros Alike.

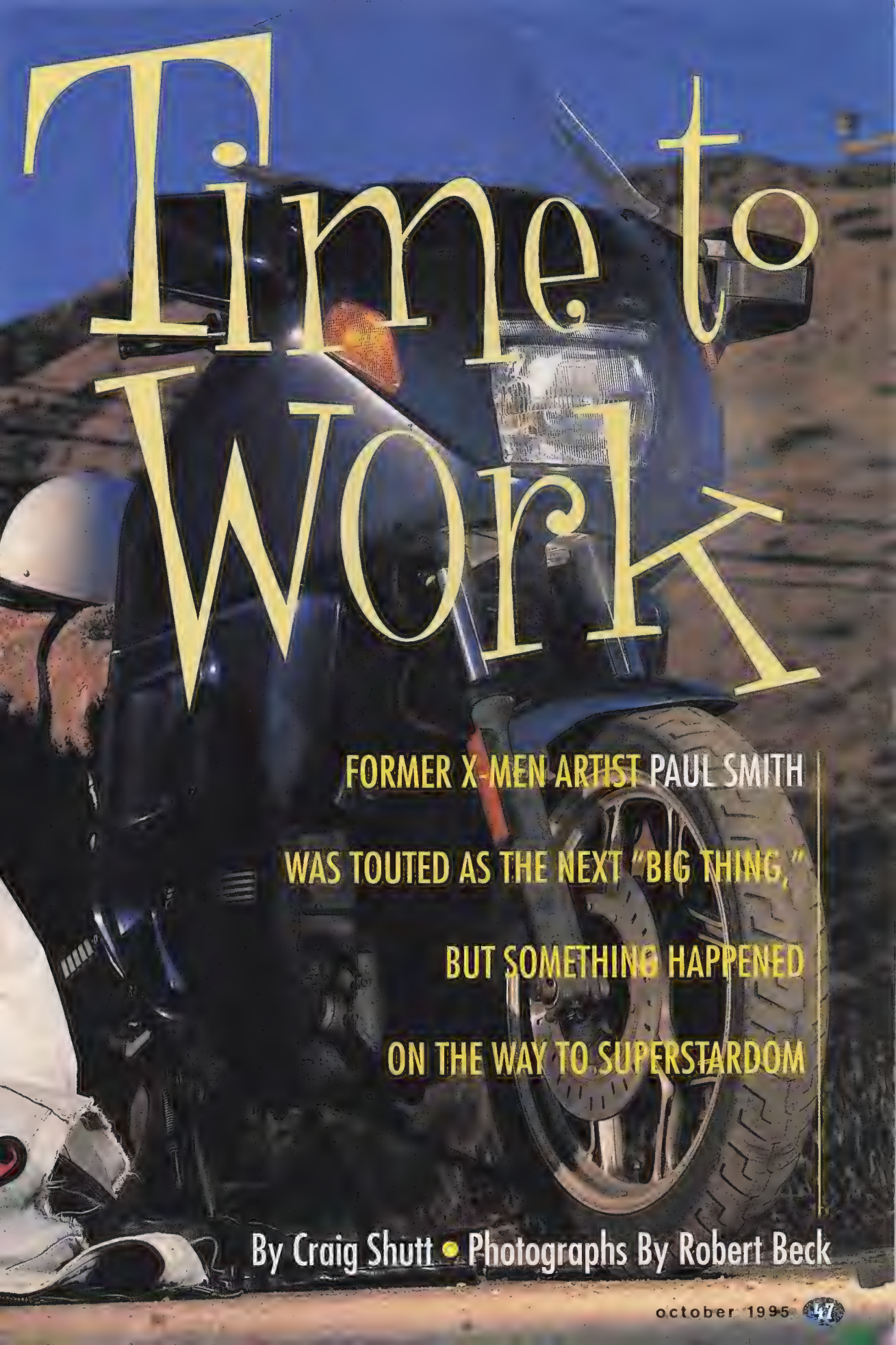
"I hate to work," he reveals. "I live a fairly basic life, and outside of my motorcycle and my stereo, what do I need money for? I'd rather be out on the beach, chasing girls or playing ball."

But that's all in the past, the 42-year-old artist vows, sitting in the small studio he's partitioned off at the back of his garage in suburban Los Angeles. "Working today for tomorrow's rent—that nonsense has got to stop," he proclaims. "I've got to get my name out to the fans."

The time has come, he realizes, to grow up, settle down, and take responsibility for the future. As Ted (Starman) Knight puts it in *The Golden Age* mini-series: "Time to work."

Knight's summation of Smith's new outlook appears in part one of DC Comics' 1994 mini-series, a series that once again raised Smith's career from the ashes. And since then, he's been slowly rebuilding his reputation as one of comicdom's hottest artists by lining up two X-Men jobs for Marvel Comics, *X-Men* #42 and #43, and the first issue of Acclaim's *Magic: The Gathering—Antiquities War*. Then, with a little luck, his next major project will be a creator-owned series with *Golden Age* writer James Robinson that they're hoping to announce soon.

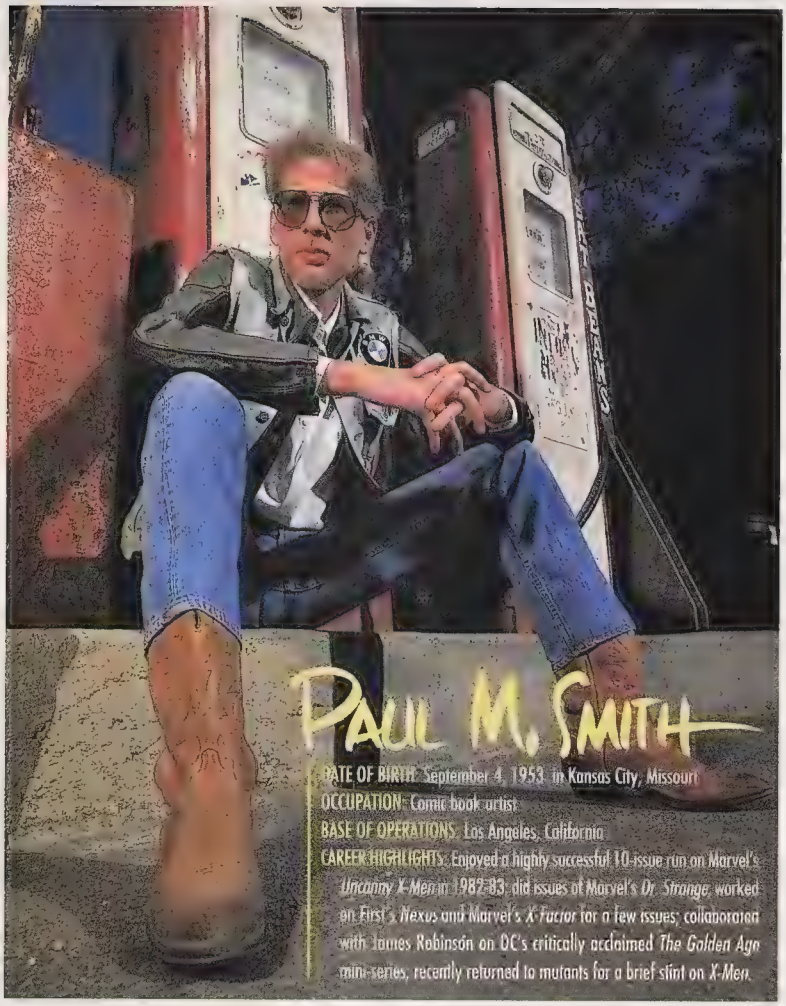




Time to Work

FORMER X-MEN ARTIST PAUL SMITH WAS TOUTED AS THE NEXT "BIG THING," BUT SOMETHING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO SUPERSTARDOM

By Craig Shutt • Photographs By Robert Beck



PAUL M. SMITH

DATE OF BIRTH: September 4, 1953 in Kansas City, Missouri
OCCUPATION: Comic book artist
BASE OF OPERATIONS: Los Angeles, California
CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Enjoyed a highly successful 10-issue run on Marvel's *Uncanny X-Men* in 1982-83; did issues of Marvel's *Dr. Strange*; worked on First's *Nexus* and Marvel's *X-Factor* for a few issues; collaboration with James Robinson on DC's critically acclaimed *The Golden Age* mini-series; recently returned to mutants for a brief stint on *X-Men*.

"I WAS AN IDIOT. I NEEDED TO GROW UP AND REALIZE THAT SOME PEOPLE WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PAY THEIR RENT THAT MONTH BECAUSE I WASN'T DOING MY JOB."

RISING STAR

"I've thrown away 12 or 13 years where I could have been doing much more lucrative jobs, as opposed to just the things I wanted to do," he says. "There's something to be said for doing the projects you like and saying that money is beneath you, but to not consider it at all was not a very mature thing to do. I've realized that I have no union, no gold watch, no pension coming, not to mention the changes in the audience and what they find acceptable."

The years that Smith considers at least partially thrown away followed a stint in animation. He began with Ralph Bakshi's *The Lord of the Rings* in 1977 when he was 24, following a couple years of junior college but no real art training.

He worked on two follow-up Bakshi projects, and then he decided to move into comics, a field which wasn't as seasonal. He did the Daredevil back-up for *Marvel Fanfare* #1 (March 1982), and that generated a few more Marvel offers. Rather than take them all, he selected an Iron Man story, which was published in *Iron Man* #159. Then he headed to Europe for a hitchhiking trip.

"There was always going to be a good reason not to go to Europe," he explains. "I knew that if I started doing comics work, I'd never go." He spent the next six months thumbing his way down the roads of the northern part of Western Europe.

When he returned, he moved to New York City to be near comics work. He did an issue of *Dr. Strange* (vol. 2, #54) and was ready to settle in on that book and *Howard the Duck* on a rotating bi-monthly basis. Then he was handed an X-Men story for *Marvel Fanfare* #4. "Apparently, I was the only one in New York with nothing to do," he says. "I mean, you don't just turn the X-Men over to anybody."

That issue was so well-received that the company turned the monthly *Uncanny X-Men* over to him a few months later, when series artist Dave Cockrum left. "I couldn't believe it," he says. "Even though I was far more interested in *Dr. Strange* and *Howard the Duck*, I realized that this was the biggest audience in comics."

He didn't find that daunting, he adds. "I was so full of myself, I didn't think it was a problem." When he delivered the first three pages, though, he thought differently. "The silence was deafening," he remembers. "The editors were not amused. Fortunately, by the end of the first issue [#165, 1982], I'd convinced them they hadn't made a wrong move."

His only real butterflies came when he attended a convention just as his first issue was released. "I'd been doing all these interviews, and I hadn't done anything yet!" he marvels. Anticipating those first fan responses "was a little nerve-wracking."

He developed a style for the X-Men that he says isn't his true one. "I knew I'd be compared to [fan-favorite *Uncanny* penciler, John] Byrne's version, which had all this rendering and cross-hatching. So I decided to deal strictly with form and silhouette, and the audience bought it."

And bought it, and bought it. He had moved to New York City from California "and a few weeks later, I found myself the single highest-paid comics artist in the history of the medium," he sums up, still not believing it.

He drew 10 issues of *Uncanny* over the next 11 months, developed an enormous following, and achieved tremendous acclaim. The money poured in, the fans fell in love, he was touted as the next major fan favorite.

Then he left.

"The whole idea was to make a name for myself for a year and leave with the big blowout [in issue #175, 1983]," he explains. "I really wanted to do Dr. Strange or Spider-Man."

That desire rose from his love of artist Steve Ditko's work, which bonded him to

Marvel Comics as a child during the company's budding days. The only DC character he gives a passing nod to is "the late, great Hal [Green Lantern] Jordan."

REGRETS AND REWARDS

Now, of course, he wonders the proverbial What If. "I sit back and say, you know, if I'd stayed on that [X-Men] book, I'd be a retired multi-millionaire now," he reflects. "But at the time, the money didn't even enter my mind."

Instead, he joined writer Roger Stern on *Dr. Strange* with #65 in 1984, where his true style emerged. "I prefer fantasy settings to science fiction," he says. "And I'd rather do single characters than teams."

But a move back to California, some "Mike Mahogany" back-up stories for the Pacific/Eclipse *Sun Runners* book with Roger McKenzie ("the best writer I've ever worked with"), and a perennial slowness with his inking kept him from doing every issue of the bi-monthly *Strange* series.

"I'm better now, but I was very bad then on meeting deadlines, very unprofessional," he admits. "I was an idiot, saying that the only thing that mattered was the work. I needed to grow up and realize that some people wouldn't be able to pay their rent that month because I wasn't doing my job."

He also disagreed with Stern over *Dr. Strange*'s creative direction, and he left with issue #73—shortly before Stern left, too. "Leaving *Dr. Strange* was one of my biggest mistakes," Smith says. "Had I known Roger was about to leave, I would have asked to write it myself."

Not evolving into a writer/artist has been a critical error, he believes. "If people remember me at all, it's as an afterthought. They think of Walt Simonson, Byrne, Frank Miller, and a half hour later they say, 'Hey, we forgot Smitty!' I think that's because I've never stayed on one book for any length of time, and I never wrote my own material [like they did]. That raises you up a notch in the industry."

Smith returned to the X-Men in 1985 with the *X-Men/Alpha Flight* two-issue team-up, which again brought him notice. Of course, he was dragged to it kicking and screaming.

"In all honesty, I had no interest in doing it," he admits. "They called, and I said, 'No! Die! Don't call me with this stuff! You scum! How dare you try to make me rich!' Drawing 25 X-Men characters had been enough of a nightmare!"

He changed his mind while walking to the corner drugstore for a soda. To get there, he had to pass the local BMW motorcycle shop, where the BMW K-100 caught his eye. "It was their first new engine design in 60 years," he recalls wistfully. "I took one look and knew it had to be mine."

He hustled back to his studio, called Marvel, and said he'd changed his mind. "I figured it would make the down payment on the bike," he explains. When the 32-page story became two 48-page best-sellers, "It paid for the bike and a whole lot more."

In fact, it paid enough for him to—you guessed it—take a break. "The rent was paid, the bike was fed, who needs to work?" he asks about that time. When he decided to stop

ONE OF SMITH'S MOST WELL-KNOWN COVERS, FROM HIS FIRST RUN ON *UNCANNY X-MEN*

riding around the country (the son of a Navy pilot, he had grown accustomed to moving around a great deal) and return to comics in 1987, he called First Comics. A major fan of *Nexus* artist Steve Rude, Smith noted that First was using fill-in artists to give Rude a breather on *Nexus*. Smith asked if he could become the permanent guest penciler.

AT TOP: PROFESSOR X FROM *X-MEN* #43. BELOW: ROBOTMAN FROM DC's *THE GOLDEN AGE*.

"There were no royalties at all on that," he notes. "I did it because *Nexus* has a story and characters. It wasn't an insult to my intelligence. I have never forgiven comics fandom for not making *Nexus* one of the biggest sellers of all time. Comics fans should be ashamed of themselves. It's an incredible strip. Steve Rude is one of the few people I will concede can draw better than I can."

Then came his return to the X-Universe with *X-Factor* in 1989, which grew from rising responsibilities in Smith's life. He got engaged to be married. He had a book deal with a writer to illustrate *Balloonacy*, a how-to book about making balloon animals, which would provide a down payment on a house. "It was time to grow up, become a man, and assume those responsibilities," he says. He called Marvel and asked to work on an X-book. He was assigned *X-Factor* with issue #44.

"It was the first time that I drew what I'd been told to draw and didn't think about it," he says. "As a result, it was the most lackluster stuff in my life. Al Milgrom [the inker] tried to save it, but he couldn't save the garbage I was doing."

Shortly after he began, he broke up with his fiancée. Then the book deal fell through and the house vanished. Then *X-Factor* launched a long, involved plotline that held absolutely no interest for Smith.

"I was feeling miserable, and I looked at my work and realized that 100 years from now, people would see my name on it and think I found it acceptable. I was knocking out garbage and collecting money. You can't demand top dollar from readers unless you're giving them top work. I freaked out."

He walked out on the book and virtually stopped drawing for two years, he says. "I don't know if it was a nervous breakdown or a hissy fit or what, but I burned [former *X-Factor* editor] Bob Harras bad, real bad."

Harras, for his part, doesn't see it that way. "I know that personal things happen, and sometimes artists don't finish certain projects, but people are people," Harras says. "You have to understand that stuff. Paul is just a nice guy, and I like his work. I'm grateful he thinks I was so understanding and noble; I just wasn't aware I was."

REDEMPTION

Smith's mental block lasted more than a year before he drew anything, he says, and those projects were sporadic—a *Nexus* or two, a Buck Rogers TSR game. "It was awful work, all of it."

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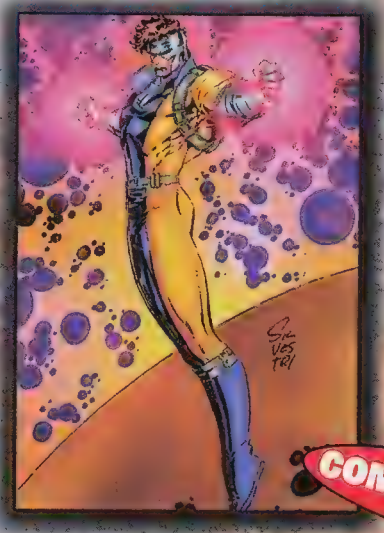

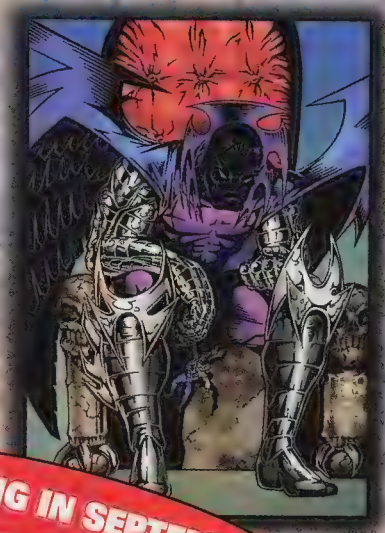

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NOT AN ACTUAL COMIC, THIS IS THE COVER TO THE PROPOSAL THAT SMITH AND WRITER JAMES ROBINSON USED TO SHOP AROUND THE *LEAVE IT TO CHANCE* PROPERTY.

Steve Rude helped pull him out of it. He connected Smith with Robinson, who was a fan of Smith's. Robinson showed Smith his *Golden Age* concept, and Smith signed on as its artist.

Smith penciled and inked issue #1, then penciled the remaining three chapters as a unit before inking any of them. That partly resulted from badly spraining his thumb while showing off for his nephew in a batting cage halfway through pencilling issue #2.

"I seem to have a way of making things difficult," he admits. "I could pencil again in a month or so, but my hand shook too much to ink. Plus, [inking three together] gave the story a nice continuity. I had a hard time developing any rhythm on the book."

In fact, the biggest problem arose earlier. "I still disclaim the first issue," he states. "It's some of the worst stuff I've ever done." DC sent him paper that refused to take his inking line, he says. "It wouldn't do anything I wanted. I delivered the first pages, and again, the silence was deafening."

This formed the catalyst for his close partnership with Robinson, which led to the new, upcoming creator-owned work. "James called and said, 'Paul, this stuff is really bad. What's wrong?'" Smith fully agreed. But he disagreed with some of Robinson's specific criticisms, and Robinson backed off. "He challenged me to do my best and gave me space if I resisted. What more can you want from a partner?"

But while the partnership flourished, the art didn't. "It was awful trying to get my vision down on that paper. If I were more of a professional, maybe I could have pulled it off." In his defense, he says, after DC Editorial Director Dick Giordano tried inking on the paper, it never reappeared at DC.

After inking page 42, he chucked the paper and bought some of his own three-ply Strathmore. He finished the remaining three pages in reverse order, ending his efforts on issue #1 with Ted Knight's "Time to work" panel. "That's when I knew my vision was clear on the page and the paper definitely was at fault," he says. Before that, the book has a "hairiness" to it, a dry brush feel he hates. (See for yourself in the collected edition, which shipped in July.)

Again, acclaim followed, mixed with the usual queries of "Where's he been?" This time, he vows the higher profile won't slip away. Still, he admits he hasn't been vigilant in producing new material since the series ended in 1994.

In part, that's because he's focused on his new strip with Robinson, a fantasy-oriented feature that he says will appeal both to younger and older readers, in much the same way the animated show *Rocky & Bullwinkle* does. Additional information remains under wraps.

"If this doesn't go, then it'll be back to one of the big companies," he explains. "I need to get my name out there, so the older generation realizes I'm not dead and the younger generation equates my style with my name."

Included in his projects right now are several for Marvel's licensed division, including some cards and POGs. He's also designing a deluxe chess board that features several unnamed Marvel characters as they originally appeared in the '60s. He's glad to know Marvel still has his phone number.

"When Bob [Harras] called me a couple years ago [to do *Uncanny X-Men* #278], I was shocked," he says. "I can't imagine how desperate he must have been to give me a call when he did. Of course, I jumped on it immediately to redeem myself. I've tried to be an extremely good boy with his office. I'll do anything to help him out. And now, I'm one of the people they call when they need help."

Harras doesn't see anything so shocking in using Smith. "We go back to Paul because Paul is good," he says simply. "Paul made his mark on the X-Men, and it's always nice to have him come back and work on them. The door is always open for Paul to come back and do more; he has an open invitation."

Smith intends to seek out more invitations. He's not only bought his first-ever filing cabinet, but he recently tore out the walls of his cozy studio space, insulated them, hung up his Kirby and Ditko Silver Age artwork, and sorted through every sheet of paper in the place to file or toss it.

Time to work.

"I've learned some lessons," he says, "and I'm a better person and a better artist as a result. You just have to take whatever value you can out of what happens to you."

Is this a new Paul Smith? "I hope so," he replies. "There's only so many times you can flush your career down the toilet and expect to come back and find an audience. Someone has to pay the bills, and unfair as it may seem, it's going to have to be me." W

Craig Shutt, who interviewed John Byrne in Wizard *#47, eats his veggies. Except for the squash.*

"I'VE LEARNED SOME LESSONS, AND I'M A BETTER PERSON AND A BETTER ARTIST AS A RESULT."

the many faces of Todd

TODD MCFARLANE OWNS MADONNA'S BUSTIER.

And Babe Ruth's shoes. But you'll learn more about that soon enough.

Sure, McFarlane writes and draws the best-selling Image comic book, *Spawn*. But there's more to the 34-year-old than just that.

Wizard spent two full days hanging out with Todd at his home (the upstairs of which is his office) in Arizona. We tagged along as he fed his infant daughter Kate, took four-year-old Cyan to day care, worked through a host of decisions at the office, played with his daughters on the backyard swingset after dinner and cheered for his wife, Wanda Kolomyjec, as she played first base for the women's softball team he sponsors. (Yep, they won both games.) He and Wanda also play on a co-ed softball team that he sponsors. "I may not be much of an artist, but I know how to play softball."

"I don't know why you'd want to write about my day, bud," he shrugs. "All I do is sit at the drawing board and gab on the phone." But few creators gab with the people Todd does. This day, among other things, he has to:

- Go over details with Alan Moore on the wind-up of his *Spawn: Blood Feud* mini-series.

- Talk through changes for the first few pages of *Spawn* #34, which Greg Capullo has already penciled, to ensure the continuity matches *Blood Feud*'s ending. Todd also reassures Capullo that he is not "dragging down" *Spawn*'s sales, as the letters column makes Capullo think.

- Review snapshots of the mold for a hamburger-head Spawn mask that Todd's college roomie Al Simmons (whom Spawn's alter ego is named after, and who dresses up as Spawn at conventions) will wear at cons. Overnighted by Industrial Light & Magic, the snaps show work is needed on the eyes and shoelace.

- Nail down a scripter for the six half-hour Spawn cartoons planned for HBO in fall 1996. Todd's the executive producer for the shows.

- Solicit comments from the TMP staff about the just-received rewrite on the Spawn movie script, scheduled to shoot in August and September with a budget of more than $37 million.

- Review each level of the upgraded Super NES Spawn game with Terry Fitzgerald, director of creative development, Todd's best friend and whom a *Spawn* character is named after.

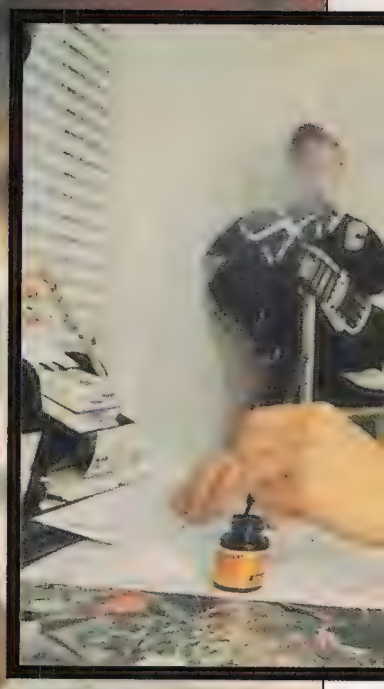
- Go over sketches faxed from fellow Image artist Rob Liefeld to finalize which six figures will be first for the Youngblood toy line, which debuts this fall along with a WetWorks line and Spawn additions.

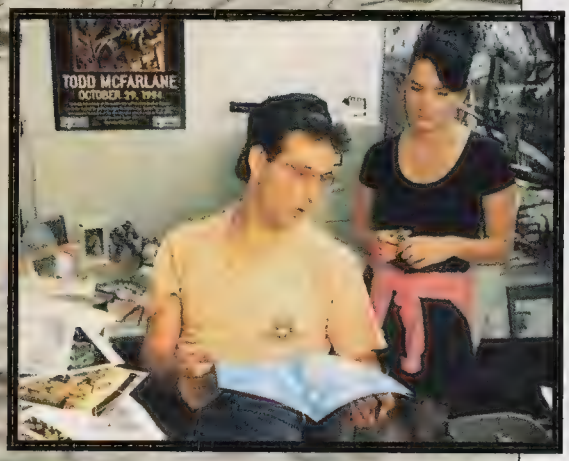
As Todd handled these, he usually was inking away at the covers to *Spawn* #36 and *Blood Feud* #3. "My days at the office are pretty dense," he admits. In fact, he'd put off having *Wizard* visit the previous week because *Spawn* #32 had to go out for production. "That's when it really gets crazy." Here's how it went in an average day at Todd McFarlane Productions.

There's more to being Todd McFarlane than just doodlin' Spawn, chattin' with Alan Moore and producing and HBO cartoon

By Craig A. Shutt • Photos By Jim McHugh

L.A. Kings star Wayne Gretzky oversees Todd's every move, as he inks the cover to *Spawn* #36. The only thing this native of Calgary, Alberta, likes more than watching the Los Angeles Kings play hockey is checking the scores in the morning paper. Before bedtime, he plays NHL games on his laptop, allowing the computer to play itself in a two-minute game so he can review the stats.





Todd checks bluelines for *Spawn* #32 with his sister, Tiffany, a recent hire who's assisting with the HBO specials. She's concerned about a bad letter-repair job in the word "Cog?!" on page 21. Todd lets it go. "You have to live with imperfect stuff, or it would never get done," he says. "The readers won't notice." Wanna bet?

the artist...

Before he settles in at the art table, Todd starts most mornings off with a bowl of cereal and toast. "I always eat breakfast. It makes it easier to get through the day if I end up having to skip lunch." Never before has he let anyone photograph him in his glasses, which he wears at the board. "Since I moved to Arizona last year, I find it hard to focus on the fine detail on the pages," he explains. "So I wear glasses and look like a slob all day. Then at night, I make myself presentable for my wife." In fact, shoes are a rare commodity in the office.

Arrayed across Todd's desk are the chromes for the mass-market *Spawn* trade paperback published this summer. Two earlier collections have been printed: a Capital City version of the first few issues and a little-known, blood-red hardback of the first 12.

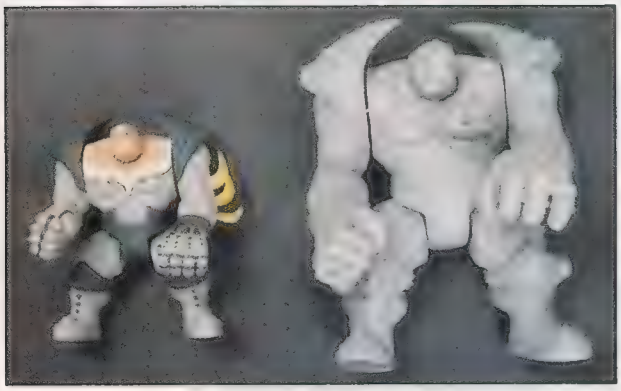
Feeling generous, Todd buys lunch for the staff from his favorite spot, Taco Bell. Lunchtime conversation? Whose feet are uglier, Todd's or Terry's? (Terry wins, big-time.) Todd often eats at his board and keeps on working.

the businessman...

Director of creative development Terry Fitzgerald shows Todd a prototype for Violator and Clown T-shirts (above). This summer, about a dozen licensed products are in production and 16 others are being negotiated. These include sneakers, POGs and video games. "At some point, the comic becomes just another license," Todd admits. "Most people who see the movie won't know there is a comic book. I'm proud of my creation and want the world to see it. If that ends up being in movies instead of comics, I have to put my efforts where they're best for the character. But right now, I don't want the tail to wag the dog."

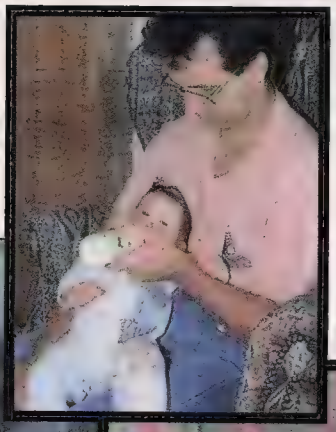
Todd takes time out to review a two-minute audition video from a Japanese animation house using his downstairs living room's 50-inch television. The animation house hopes to be tapped to do the HBO Spawn cartoons. The video includes scenes of Spawn's power blasts, Spawn resting on a rooftop and (the comic's) Terry and Wanda romping through a field. Todd eventually turns thumbs down. "HBO has been great to work with," he says. "They're letting me make this just the way I want to."

Todd and Terry review sketches for the new Youngblood, WetWorks and Spawn toylines for the fall. The sketches will be turned into twice-life-size models for final three-dimensional approval, which usually are approved via videos of the models. Below, Todd checks the, er, play value on the Spawn Air Cycle (yeah, right), due out in September, along with the new paint job on Malebolgia. "Toys are a kooky business," he says. "They take a lot of my time."



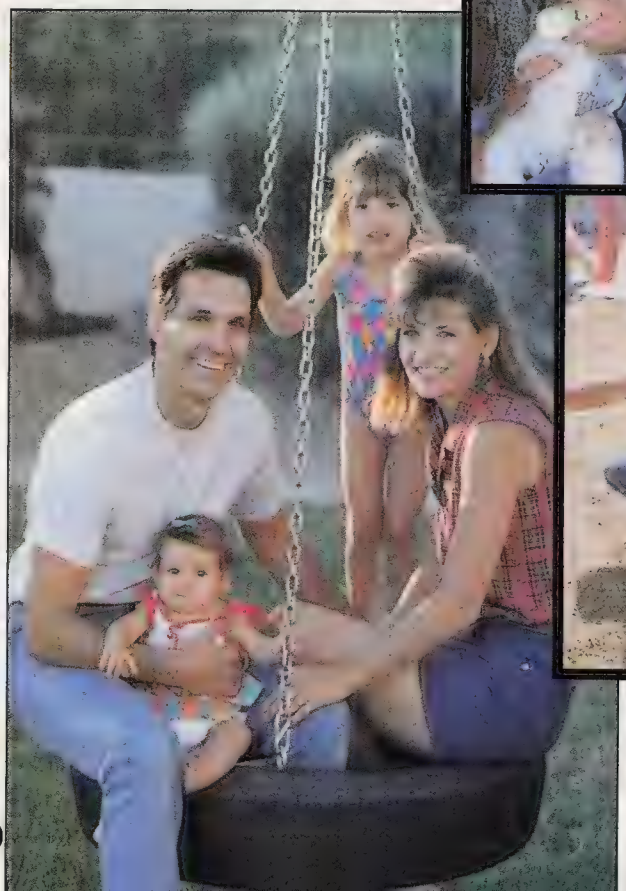
the fan...

Todd swears the Madonna memorabilia was collected for his daughters and for its historical significance. But he admits that he finds Madonna "a smart woman." Included are an autographed bustier and her uniform from the movie, *A League of Their Own*. Besides signed hockey jerseys, his sports memorabilia collection includes autographed Nolan Ryan baseballs, a glove signed by Honus Wagner and Ty Cobb, and 1920s leather shoes autographed by Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.



the dad...

Kate McFarlane (top) is cutting teeth, so dad doesn't need an alarm clock. The "Future Kings' Star" sleeper now outfits its second McFarlane daughter. Todd and Wanda take turns dropping off and picking up Cyan (at far right) at day care. "The husbands are mad at me, because their wives keep asking why they can't take the kids to day care like Toddy does," he exults. Cyan missed her evening swim class because she had a mysterious illness, which had her parents worried until it miraculously disappeared the minute it was too late to make it to class. "She played us like a fiddle," Todd says, amused but trying not to show it. It's a happy ending to just another day in the life.



Craig Shutt, who profiles Paul Smith on page 46, wants to know how Todd can make it through days like this without ever drinking coffee.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

AN EXTREME™ STUDIOS & WILDSTORM™ PRODUCTIONS PRODUCTION

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DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The eight talented people whose artwork got an honorable mention this month will each receive a *Fantastic Four* #400 signed by Tom DeFalco and a *Robin* #0 signed by Tom Grummett. The three awesome runners-up will each receive an *X-Force* #38 signed by Fabian Nicieza, a *Wolverine* #85 signed by Adam Kubert and an *Amazing X-Men* #1 signed by Adam Kubert. Mitchell Lara, the amazing artist of the winning entry this month, will receive all that fine stuff, plus an original piece of Violator art by Greg Capullo (thanks heaps, guy)! Congrats to all of you!

THE ARTIST

MITCHELL LARA

THE BOOTY

GRAND PRIZE

BABY FETT **Mitchell Lara** Chicago, IL

RUNNERS-UP

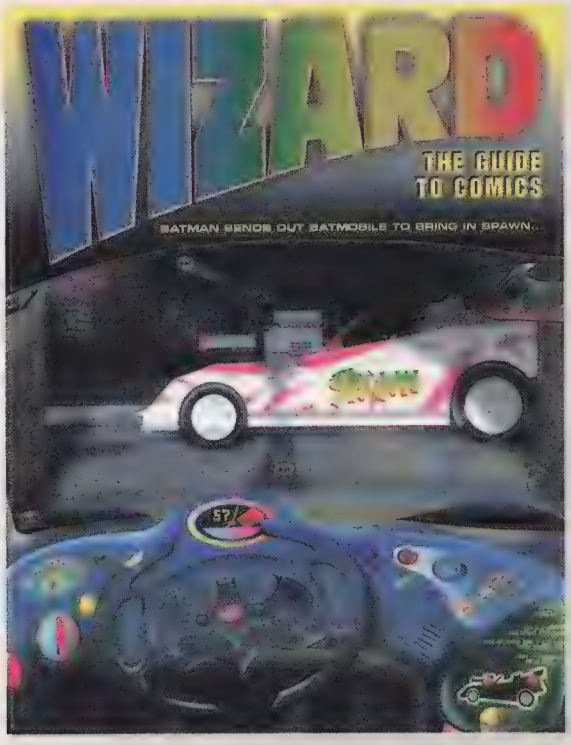
LOONEY X-TUNES **Ramon Leon** Texas City, TX

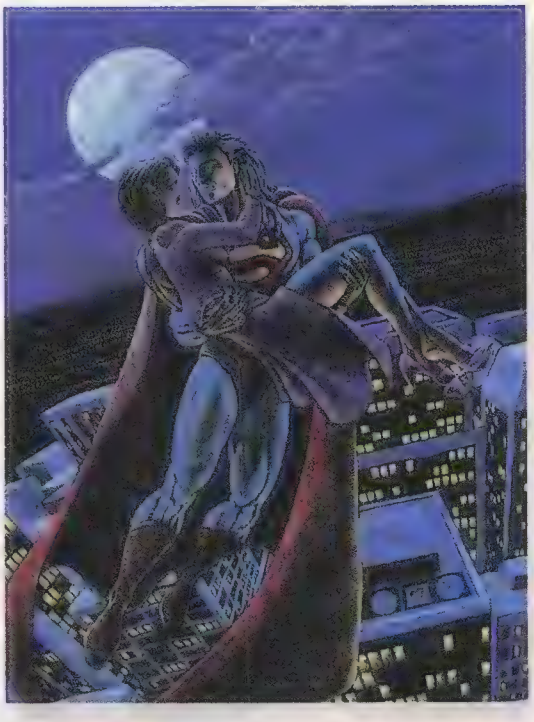
Want your art to appear on one of these four pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name and full address on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

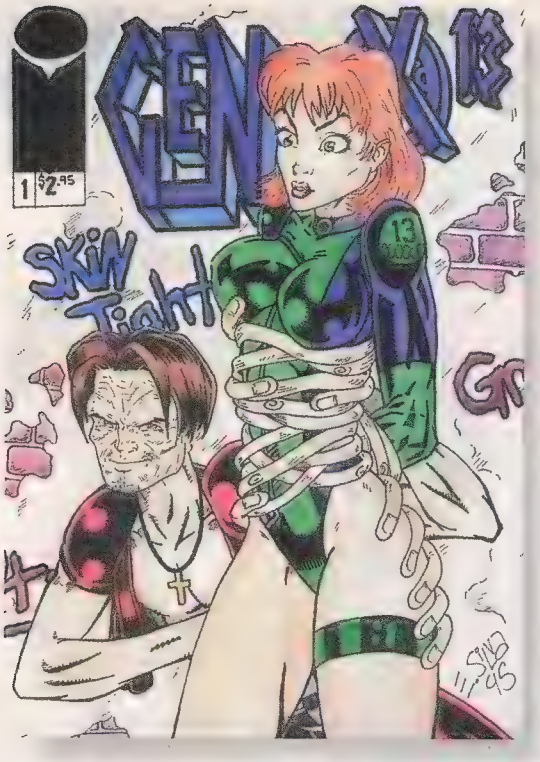
BATMOBILE VS. SPAWNMOBILE **Kield Mahoney** Marshfield, MA





SUPERMAN AND LOIS **John Polacek** Western Springs, IL

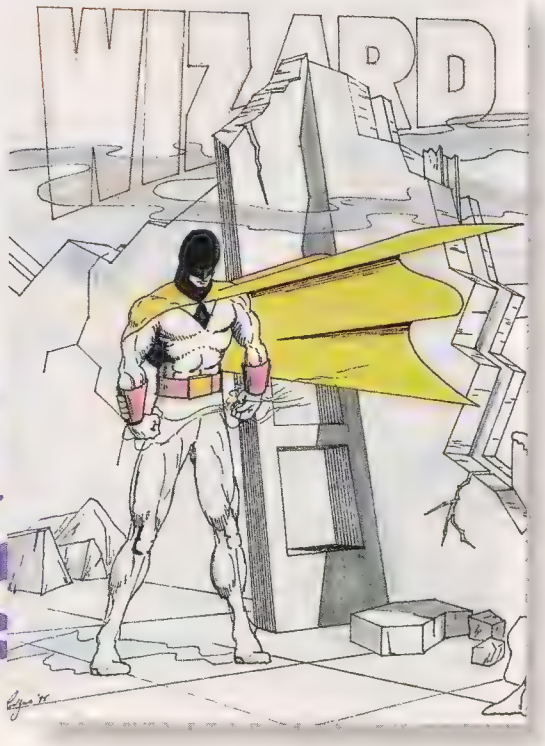
HONORABLE MENTION



GEN X-13
Emmanuel Silva
San Jose, CA

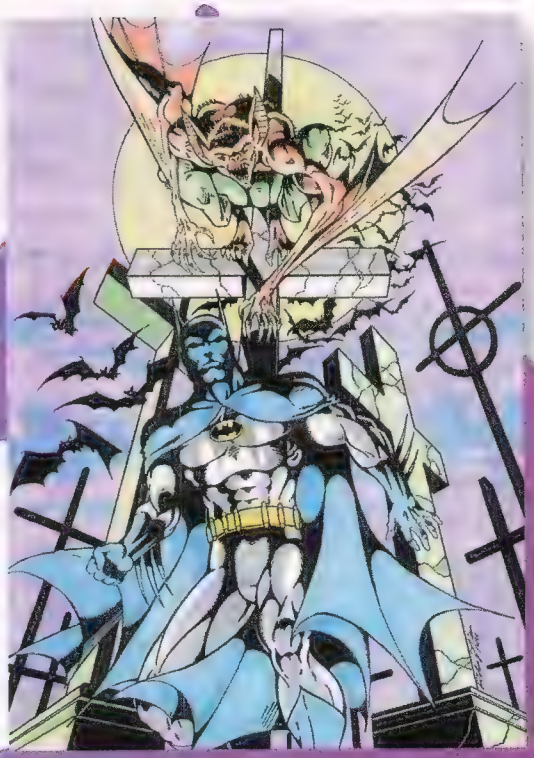
THE CROW
Leinil G. Yu
Las Pinas, Metro Manila, Philippines

THE INHUMANS
Michael Lemane
Covington, LA



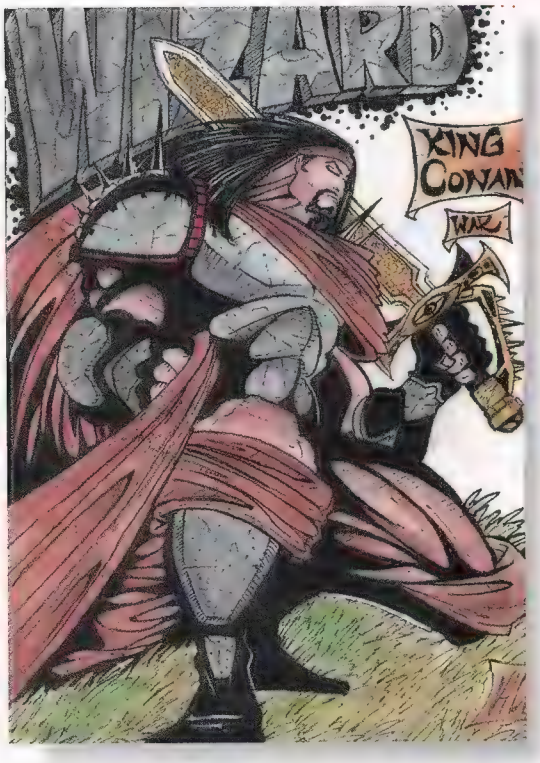
SPACE GHOST
Richard Rodgers
Cincinnati, OH

BATMAN VS. MAN-BAT
Robert Saunders
Port Moody, B.C., Canada



SABRETOOTH AND BLINK
Lopez Emmanuel
Saint-Fens, France

SUNFIRE
Haroon Ansary
Fremont, CA



KING CONAN
Raul Faria
Las Vegas, NV

Greg Capullo's

KRASH COURSE

PERSPECTIVE IS CAKE!

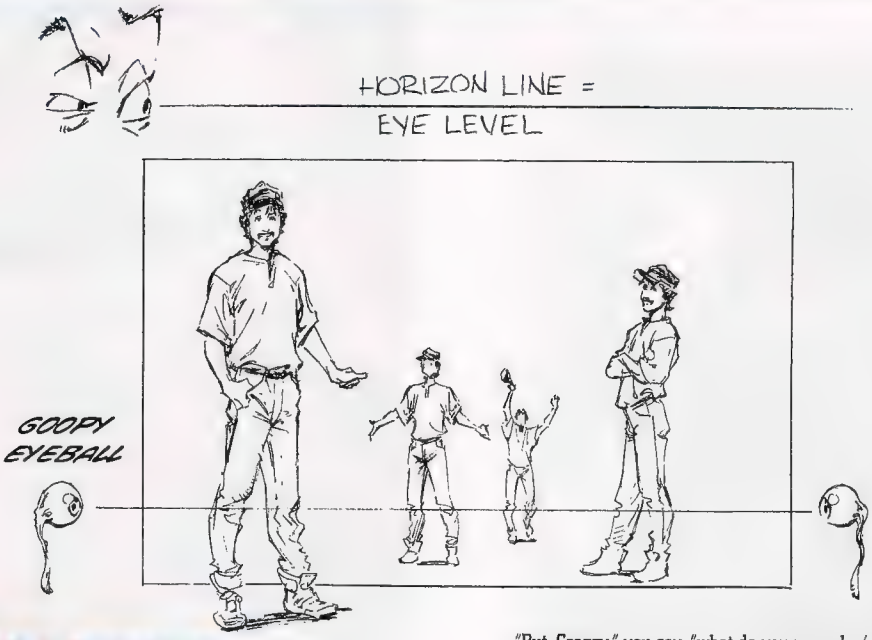
(at least after you read this)

Hey, guys! Been drawin' any half-naked ladies lately? (Last month's lesson, for those of you just joining us.)

Y'know, it scares me to see the number of punks out there (present company excluded) wearing the tag "professional" who don't even understand the most basic principles of perspective. There's just no excuse for it! However, this month's column is not for them. We won't be discussing one-, two- or even three-point perspective. Nor vanishing points or converging lines. 'Cause let's face it, if you're above the age of 10 and haven't gotten to that stuff by now...to be nice, let's just say you're way behind. (But to be fair, if you've never even heard of perspective, you should pick up *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way* by Stan Lee and John Buscema or *Perspective* by J.M. Parramon. They'll have everything you need to know about perspective.)

Instead, this month's column is devoted to all you tough guys out there. The future comic gods who will one day rise up and kick the asses of the punks that are here now.

OK. You've gotten the basics down, but there's still some confusion in your head. Not to worry! Uncle Greggy's gonna turn on the light for you. I promise.



1. on the horizon

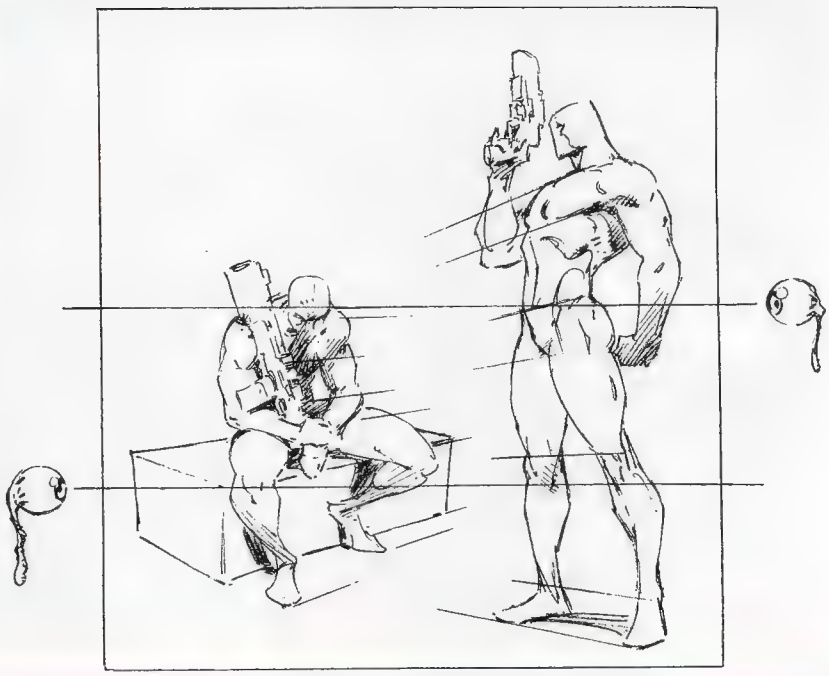
Don't let all the vanishing points and converging lines intimidate you. The main thing you *always* need to be aware of is the horizon line, which simply means where your eye level is. In fact, from now on we'll refer to the horizon line as your ELL (your Eye Level Line).

"But, Greggy," you say, "what do you mean by 'eye level'?" Let's assume you're crouched down so that your eyeballs are even with my knees. This is your eye level. So you draw a horizontal line across the picture frame that intersects with my knees! Now, since you're not gonna move your eyeballs, and I can't magically change how tall I am, no matter where you place me in the picture, my knees are gonna be even with the ELL! Piece o' cake, right?

KRASH COURSE and all related text, artwork and characters ™ & © Greg Capullo

2. ¡No es bueno!

Problems arise when you try to include two (or more) different eye levels within the same picture frame. Your drawing will be all cockeyed! Your eyeballs can't be in two places at once (Peter Falk excluded), unless you plan on ripping one of 'em outta your head with a fork and placing it somewhere else! Therefore, there can't be two different ELLs in one panel. This illustration is an example of incorrect perspective; each individual figure may be OK perspective-wise, but they're definitely out of perspective with each other. So to avoid having problems like "floating" or "tipping" figures, or figures that appear disproportionately large or small, make sure you leave the fork on the table, and both eyes in your head and in one place within the picture frame!

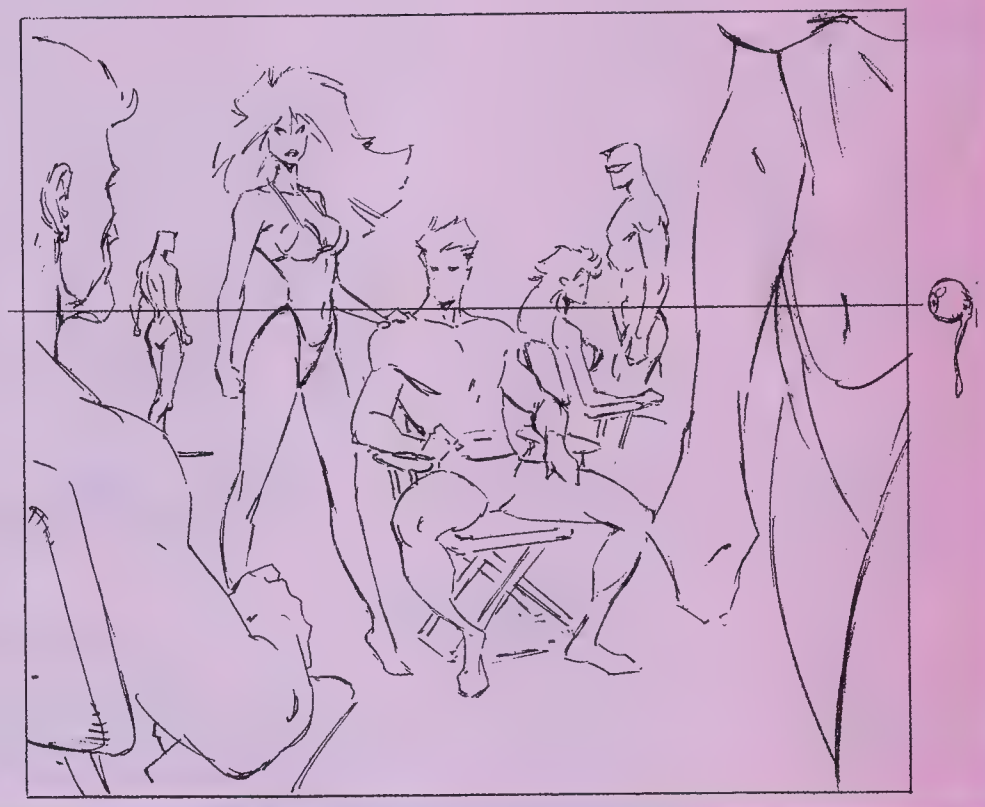


3. ¡Es muy bueno!

"Hanging" perspective is a li'l trick Greggy's gonna show you that'll really help you understand this stuff.

Any object or figure in your picture that's even with your eye level will remain so throughout. In the example below, your eye level is even with the chins of those who are seated. Notice that the chins are resting on the ELL. Now obviously if someone is standing, their chin wouldn't rest on the ELL, as noted in this panel. Instead, whatever part of their body is even with your eye level would be on that line. In this case, their waist. (See next issue for my explanation of size differences, which enabled me to decide upon the waist as the eye level here.) So given that all the standing figures are equal in height—and likewise the seated figures—no matter where you place them within the picture frame, their chins and waists will be on that line. Can you feel your power growing? I knew that you could. Just a few more examples, and you'll be ready!

HANGMAN, ANYONE?



4. the tip o' yer nose

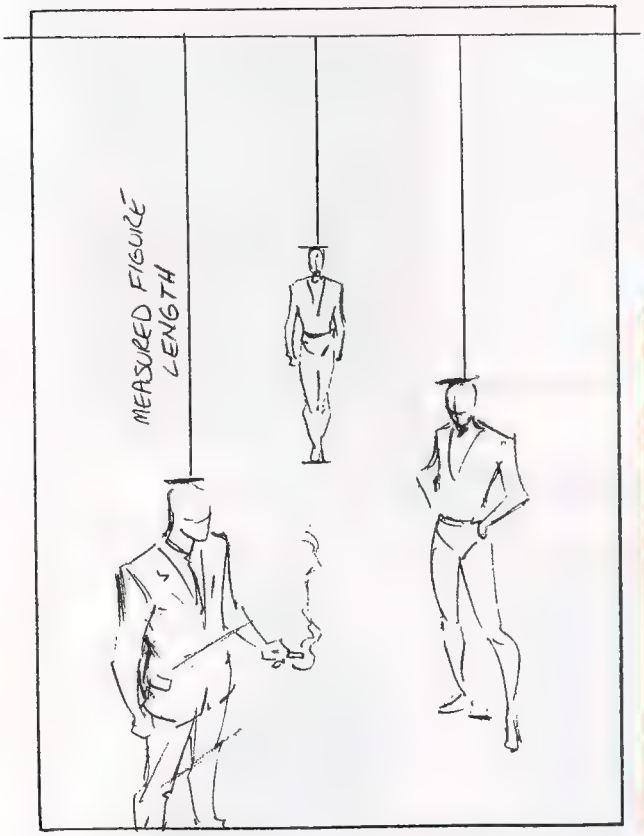
In this example, your ELL is even with the bottom of the nose of each guy in the picture. Notice that no matter how close or far away you place your figures, the nose rests on the ELL. This again assumes that all the figures are of the same height.

"But Greggy, what if you wanted different-sized people in the picture too?" you ask. No problem! Let's say one of the guys has a girlfriend who's shorter than he is, maybe if they stood face to face, her eyes would only come up to his nose. Well, seeing as how the ELL is at his nose level, if she was to be drawn into the panel, then her eyes would also be on that line, no matter where you place her in the picture! If you do that, all the figures will be in true relation to each other.

5. figure this...

"But...but, Greggy, what if you want to do a downwards shot or somethin' where you can't draw part of the figure on the ELL?" Still cake!

To keep things brutally simple, we'll again assume all the figures are equal in height. In this down shot, I used head units (head lengths) to measure the distance from the ELL that the figures would be placed. In this case, the distance is two head lengths below the ELL. No matter where you want to place your figures, simply measure two of their head lengths down from the ELL, and BAM! All the figures will relate to each other in proper perspective!



See how the woman in the background on page 60 is two of *her* heads away from the ELL, while the guy on the far left is two of *his* heads below it? Any unit of measurement can be used—an entire figure length, or even more. (Check out the panel to the left. It's all up to you and what you need. Do you want your ELL to be only slightly above the figures or 50 feet above them? Your call. But above all, call it cake!

6. a test

Allllrightee, then! Let's give you a little test to see how much you've learned.

Below is a comic panel with some major problems (which I did on purpose, of course) going on. I'll give you all a clue as to where the ELL is. After that, it's up to you to find the mistakes. I'll give you the answers next month and you'll be able to grade yourself to see how you did. And now for the clue. Ready? Here goes...

The man in the foreground is standing, and he is of the exact same height as the man standing in the background.

Till next month...keep the lead burnin', tough guys! **W**

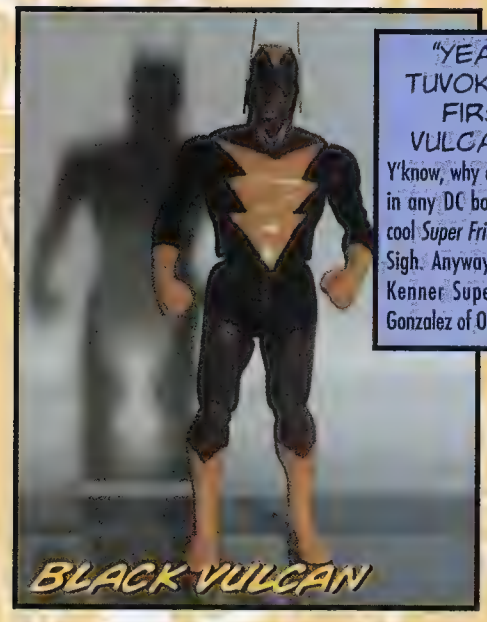
Greg Capullo can be seen every month doing his fair share of the art on Spawn, *published by Image Comics.*

HOMEMADE HEROES

Believe it or not, the following figures were made out of plain old, ordinary figures, (or from scratch and every one of the talented creators will receive a Judge Dredd action figure three-pack and a copy of DC's *Judge Dredd* #1 signed by writer Andrew Helfer. The two runners-up will each get their cool three-pack signed by its designer, Dave Wolfram. The Grand Prize winner runs off with all that stuff plus a limited-edition Judge Dredd Polystone statue. Congratulations to everyone! →

Thanks very much to the fine folks at Mattel for their generous donation of prizes. What a company!

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.



"YEAH, I'LL KICK TUVOK'S BUTT. THE FIRST 'BLACK VULCAN,' MY ASS!"

Y'know, why didn't Black Vulcan appear in any DC book? He appeared on the cool *Super Friends* cartoon, and that's it. Sigh. Anyway, he was made out of a Kenner Super Powers Flash by Eric Gonzalez of Odessa, Fla.

"WHY DON'T YOU GO WHERE FASHION FITS/PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ..."

Made from a Kenner Jurassic Park "Spitter Kit," Jhenn Pratt of Augusta, Maine did a pretty bang-up job on this vicious Neil Gaiman character.

"YOU'D WEAR SHADES TOO IF YOUR BREASTS WERE THIS SHINY!"

The base of this figure was a Mattel Barbie figure. Then Troy Younger of Commerce City, Colo. added a homemade outfit, and bang!—a cool entry.

"RHARRGH!! I WARNED PUNY HUMANS—MADDER BABAR GETS, *STRONGER* BABAR GETS!"

This StormWatch member used to be a Mattel WildC.A.T.s Maul figure. All Ken Goach of Austin, Texas, had to do was slap some paint and Super Sculpey on it. Good work, Ken.

"GEEZ, MF, I KNOW YOU'RE CONSTIPATED AND ALL, BUT IF YOU KEEP PUSHIN' SO HARD, YOU'LL SHOOT YOUR BELLYBUTTON OFF."

Morganville, N.J.'s Joe Acevedo made Captain Atom from a Toy Biz Silver Surfer 3 figure, while the Major was made from a Toy Biz Mr. Fantastic 2 body with a head from a Trigger Happy figure from Tyco's Double Dragon line.

SECOND PRIZE

"I'VE REALLY GOTTA STOP EATIN' CHEERIOS IN THIS DAMN SUIT!"

Lewis J. Greene II of Oxon Hill, Md., produced this "Age of Apocalypse" character from a Toy Biz Random body, with Trevor Fitzroy armor and a clear plastic bubble.

SECOND PRIZE winner

"DAMN YOU, MOLECULE MAN! WE'LL GET YOU FOR SHRINKING JEAN'S HEAD!!"

From the left (deep breath, now...): Iceman is a repainted Toy Biz Iceman 1, Beast is a redone Beast, Cyclops is a repainted Cyclops 1, Angel is a repainted Archangel 1, and Marvel Girl is a repainted Toy Biz Invisible Woman 1. All were done by Chris Polansky of Paola, Kan.

GRAND PRIZE winner

"HEY, T-BIRD, I CAN KICK YOUR...AW, MAN, WHAT'D I JUST STEP IN?!?"

Crafted by Mike McCaughey of Sewell, N.J., The Crow here was made from modeling clay and Super Sculpey stuff. Ain't it cool as hell? Congratulations, Mike!

THE WINNER

MIKE McCAUGHEY

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (no Polaroids!) to:

Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Wizard & Todd McFarlane Productions Present:

contest

HANGING WITH TODD McFARLANE CONTEST

This contest is sponsored by Todd McFarlane Productions,
makers of fine comic books, toys and maybe someday, baby booties.

"What? Hang with Todd?!?"

It's a contest, silly. And one lucky Grand Prize Winner will get the chance to hang with Todd McFarlane for the day as an actual employee of Todd McFarlane Productions. After being flown (as part of your all-expenses-paid trip) to Stately McFarlane Manor, you'll be hired on as Todd's assistant and paid the standard TMP daily wage of one American dollar. During the day, you'll assist Mr. McFarlane with inking—or maybe writing—whatever issue of *Spawn* he's working on at the time. Don't worry—you'll get the recognition you're due. You'll be listed in the credits and be given 100 complimentary copies of that issue.

Times being tough, you'll be laid off at the end of the day. Sorry, them's the breaks. But you'll be given a send-off into retirement in grand style, as the McFarlane clan gives you a retirement cookout party and an Image Comics retirement watch in commemoration of the occasion. Whew! What a day!

"So How Do I Enter?"

Just like any job, you've got to tell us why you're qualified. Tell us why you, of all people, should be Todd's able assistant. So send us your résumé (that's the list of all your experience 'n' qualities). Give us your educational background, your comic background, and let us know about any special skills you have. Can you touch your nose with your tongue? Can you beat the hell out of a savage wombat with one arm tied behind your back? Can you bake a cherry pie quicker than a cat can wink its eye? Tell Todd what makes you the one that he should choose as the winner. We'll send all the résumés to Todd, and may the best assistant win!

Runner-Up (O): What? Are you friggin' kidding us?

This Grand Prize is cool enough. You'll get nothing and like it.

THE LEGALESE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Todd McFarlane Productions, their immediate families and Kato Kaelin. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach the form or card to your résumé. Mail each entry separately to: Hangin' with Todd Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize will be offered. Prize is awarded in the name of contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Hey! John Byrne! Put that pencil down! You don't really want to enter this contest. Do you?

All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1995.

Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or incomplete entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winner will be selected based on quality and creativity (along with the skills listed) among all properly completed entries by Todd McFarlane and Wizard Press. Judging will take place on November 15, 1995.

For the winner's name, available after November 15, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
Hangin' with Todd Contest Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this sucker out, put it an envelope, attach your stuff and send the whole googob to: Hanging with Todd Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Official Hangin' with Todd Entry Form

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ Hamburger or Hot Dog? (gotta plan a menu, ya know) _____

Deadline is October 31, 1995. *HURRY!*

wizard exposed

The completely unabridged history of *Wizard* (and why you'll never see issue #10's cover again)

WIZARD PRESS IS NOT GOING TO LAST. I was fairly confident of that fact when we started. I wanted it to work, and the fanboy inside of me daydreamed about how cool it would be if the magazine became a success, but the reality was that we were off to a poor start. With a staff consisting of roughly half a dozen people, we worked out of two rooms in Gareb's house, one of which, a 12-by-15-foot air conditioner-less ex-bedroom, housed four people who shared three desks and two computers (I worked mostly off a yellow legal pad, my knee for a desk). Initial sales of the magazine were low, and sinking lower with every issue.

I had originally gotten involved with *Wizard* through The Wizard of Cards and Comics store in Nanuet, N.Y., which was owned by Gareb's mom, in 1988. There, Gareb and I put out three monthly eight-page newsletters for the store's comic book club, which helped set the stage for a full-scale, national comic magazine.

Even though it's often commented that *Wizard* was an overnight sensation, the bumpy road we traveled was one fraught with hardship, personal sacrifices and mistakes that almost closed our doors. And that information's never been revealed to the public.

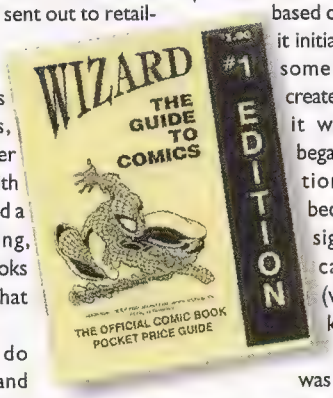
Until now.

By Pat McCallum

Pre-Wizard

The original outline for *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* bore little resemblance to the magazine today. It had no feature interviews, fan-participation departments or any of the fun goofy crap like "C.B.I.Q." or "Bullpen." It was to be a straightforward comic book price guide, and the little editorial that existed would be along the lines of a sort of market watch, a checklist of the 10 hottest comics and a back-issue pick section.

Our first step towards producing a full-fledged magazine was the creation of the little-known *Wizard* ashcan, of which about 500 were printed and sent out to retailers. It contained a price guide limited to the hottest-selling titles (the X-Men books, Spidey books, Punisher books, etc.), along with a brief introduction and a survey page asking, "What are the hot books in your store and what are they selling for?"



The little-known *Wizard* ashcan.

The idea to do creator interviews and fan-related columns/departments was an idea we had touched upon, but we were still going to be solely a price guide publication. Then Gareb met Walter Wang, former co-owner of the Comics Unlimited comic distributor, and the two talked about our initial outline. He strongly suggested we include more features, so we fleshed out the book to include some editorial. With this change, we needed someone to help coordinate and edit the stuff, and Patrick Daniel O'Neill, then senior contributing writer of *Comic Scene*, as well as frequent contributor to *Starlog* and *Comics Interview*, was brought onto the team. A few more staffers were added, and we set off on what we thought would be the simple task of putting together a 96-page magazine.

I mean, how hard could it be?

Wizard #1

The first issue was a nightmare. Everything was running late. We were working night and day; we learned to do everything right by doing it wrong at least four times, and the stress-level was nearly unbearable. The last 48 hours before the book had to be absolutely finished were the worst. I barely got any sleep, and I don't think Gareb got any.

This issue contained the first "Letter From the Publisher" (later called "Publisher's Page" and now called "From the Top") featuring the most obnoxious photo of Gareb I've ever seen in my life. Even though I told him what I thought of it, he still chose to run it. Over four years later, I've finally gotten him to admit I was right.

Hi, my name is Gareb S. Shamus and I'd like to sell you some life insurance or a used car or something.

Wizard #2

Wizard #2 saw the debut of the first *Wizard* contest ("Win a Platinum *Spider-Man* #1!"). This issue was also supposed to debut *Wizard* trading cards featuring Marvel characters, patterned after images taken from our Marvel-based covers. Marvel gave it initial approval, we had some prototype cards created, but Marvel nixed it weeks before we began full-scale production of the cards because they had just signed a deal to do cards with Impel (which later became known as SkyBox).

Also debuting was "Wizard of Cards," the non-sports card column, written by the youngest Shamus brother, Stephen. (Sidenote #1: What can we say? We were hard-pressed for a name and were running *way* behind deadline.)

In the same issue, we decided to run an action figure column which we wound up calling "Toying Around." I offered the column to Brian Cunningham, a fella who frequented the comic store and did some writing for the pre-*Wizard* newsletter. After several years of freelance writing, Brian finished college, took on a full-time job as *Wizard*'s News Editor, and is now the Editor of this book. (Sidenote #2: Brian showed up for his first day of work in a suit and tie, and all of us editors, designers and assistants, dressed in T-shirts and jeans, made his first day of *Wizard* a living hell. Yeah, he showed up the next day in jeans and a T.)

Wizard #3

This ish saw the debut of *Wizard*'s letters page. Attached to its premiere was the obligatory "Name This Letter Column!" contest, which would be won in issue #6 by Keith Anderson with his suggestion "Magic Words." Letter column titles we almost went with included: "Merlin's Mail," "Magic Messages" and "Wizard Talk."

We later found out that Magic Words was the title of DC's *Dr. Fate* letter column, but seeing as how only like two people read *Dr. Fate*, we didn't really care. As an interesting sidenote, we received about 30 letters a month for the letters page back then. Now, we get about 2,500 a month. Neat, huh?

Wizard #4

Our first DC cover, Batman (by then-*Justice League Europe* penciler Bart Sears—his first of many *Wizard* covers), saw more *Wizard* firsts inside as well. The first of many video game columns made its debut this ish. What made this one unique was that it was produced by *GamePro* magazine, who gave us the rights to reprint some of their comic related reviews. It was dropped after two issues (only to be revived in a different, *Wizard*-produced format...and then cut...and then revamped... and then cut, etc.).

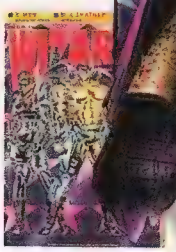
In addition, we ran a "Draw a *Wizard* Cover" contest which generated such a staggering amount of entries that a new department, "Amazing Art" (now called "Drawing Board"), was created with issue #8.

Wizard #6

We switched our paper stock from the very crappy newsprint-type to a nicer, cleaner, smoother paper. This was also about the time Gareb paid a visit to artist Walt Simonson's home (who lived in the area), to pursue a Thor cover. While that never panned out, Gareb got to meet Mr. Simonson's comic organizer and assistant researcher Tom Palmer Jr., 17-year-old son of *Avengers* inker Tom Palmer. The two chatted and, KABOOM, we had "Palmer's Picks" which debuted this issue.

Wizard #7

Sales were sinking even lower. This was the first issue where we had two distinct pieces of art on the cover. Barry Windsor-Smith did an awesome X-O Manowar cover for the direct market, but



fans who bought *Wizard* on the newsstand had no exposure to Valiant's superhero line. So, just to play it safe, we went with a Bart Sears-drawn Flash cover on the newsstand. Oh, and we mentioned a new company called Image Comics for the first time. (We'd later mention them again. Often.)

Wizard #8

Sales still sucked, and the continued publication of this magazine came into question. Since we had nothing to lose, we gambled on a character that we (and fans) knew nothing about. Several months before the first appearance of the X-Men's Bishop, we gave Whilce Portacio the go-ahead to do us a cover. Fan reaction to the piece was tremendous, and to this day it remains one of our best covers.

This month's "Toying Around" gave tips on how to create a homemade action figure, and asked fans to send in photos of any they made—which they did by the hundreds; and later on, by the thousands. A sidebar to "Toying Around," called "Figure of the Month," would kick off in *Wizard* #10, spotlighting one homemade action figure, and eventually became "Homemade Heroes." (I had the distinction of being the first "fan" to have a homemade figure showcased, when a photo of a USAgent figure I made out of a Toy Biz Captain America was used to illustrate this column. I didn't win anything, though.)

Wizard #9

"Brutes & Babes," our first art column, kicked off. It was originally offered to Walt Simonson (who declined due to a heavy workload), and then offered to Bart Sears, who accepted but couldn't start until *Wizard* #10. So we launched it a month early with the first installment hosted by colorist Paul Mounts, who gave a behind-the-scenes look at airbrush coloring.

(Sidenote #3: When trying to come up with a name for the column, we suggested "Art with Bart." That frightful title was followed by a long stretch of silence on the phone. Bart intelligently ignored our "clever" title idea and named the column "Brutes & Babes.")

Whilce Portacio takes on tomorrow and pens the future mutant Bishop for cover #8.

Wizard #10

This issue was the most important issue we ever produced and also the most difficult.

It started with Rob Liefeld handing in a cover that was originally planned for somewhere between issues #5-#9. The cover was supposed to be of Sabretooth, but Rob (as *X-Force* artist) wanted to do a Cable cover, and later (as *Youngblood* artist) a Shaft cover. So we asked for two covers. Rob economized the whole thing and sent us one cover with both Cable and Shaft. That caused us a bit of concern, it being a cross-company cover and all. But we went with it.

Then we laid it into the cover format, and the art was the wrong size—the characters obscured the cover logo and issue number. We toyed with squeezing the art, but Rob asked that we not alter it. So we didn't.

As the book was being printed, we got a call from Marvel who caught wind of the cross-company "team-up." They let us know just how unhappy they were about it. We apologized, but they were still pretty miffed. They let us run the cover (after we explained it was sorta printed already), but we had to change the poster insert (the cover image minus the logo), and ran with a god-awful Spider-Man poster that Marvel supplied us. Oh, and we were instructed to never show that artwork again, which is why you haven't seen it since and never will again.

As daunting as the cover problem was, we went ahead with increasing our page count from 160 to 200, and experimented with polybagging the issue with a freebie floating around the bag: a Youngblood card by Rob Liefeld.

The free card was a huge success for us, as fans and retailers really began to take notice of us. Our sales saw a significant jump because of the card, and began to increase with every subsequent issue because we continued producing cards with Image-based

characters on 'em. The industry began to take notice of "that new comic magazine."

On the lighter side, Bart Sears began his 30-month run on "Brutes & Babes," as well as the first annual *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt. The Scavenger Hunt was impossibly popular, seeing as how we made fans dig up all kinds of ridiculous crap like a coupon for macaroni & cheese, a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles Band-Aid, and a Dunkin Donuts napkin—and all we awarded in this first hunt were some lousy superhero card sets.

And finally, one of the hottest debates to race through our pages ignited when Doug Goldstein, former "Magic Words" columnist (and current Production Director for Wizard Press), stated that Iron Man could kick the X-Men's butts. An incredible avalanche of mail ensued from enraged X-fans across the country, all describing, in dazzling detail, how the X-Men could squash Iron Man. We *still* get mail on it.

Wizard #11

Our first of many Spawn covers, this piece of art was actually a design-sketch that McFarlane had lying around his studio. You'll notice that the band on Spawn's upper arm features studs instead of spikes, which the final version of the costume had.

This issue also saw Doug leave "Magic Words" because of his workload. So I took over, which was something I wanted to do anyway. My first outing as letter column guy saw the beginning of the "Who is the X-traitor?" debate, which we tracked in *Wizard* for about a year or so, until it became obvious that Marvel wasn't planning on progressing that storyline anytime soon. (To this writing, they still haven't resolved it.)

Oh, and *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* was awarded Best New Publisher from Diamond Comics Distributors in 1991.

Wizard #15

Whilce Portacio returned to do our first-ever gatefold cover. He was originally scheduled for a single-panel cover featuring his new Image team WetWorks, but the sketch he faxed over just didn't seem to work as a cover. Accompanying his fax were four other pages, each featuring sketches of several members of the team, just to give us a better idea of his as-yet unpublished characters. When Gareb saw those sketches, he called up Whilce, asked him if he could link all four sketches, and if we could use that as a cover. He said yes, and BAM, we had a cover.

It's a shame that this issue, in my opinion, was our worst *Wizard* to date. This was right before the 1992 San Diego Comic Con, which the entire staff was headed off to. With our normally last-minute deadlines pushed up by about a week, the office was in chaos. The end result: a sloppy issue of *Wizard*, with the icing being that we re-ran the page numbers from last issue's table of contents, meaning that *Wizard* #15's table of contents, the roadmap of the issue, was completely wrong.

And on a prophetic note, a fan by the name of Jason Slade closed his letter to "Magic Words" with "Until Sergio Aragonés joins Image, make mine *Wizard*!" Bye, Jason.

Wizard #17

Next to issue #15, issue #17 holds a special place in my heart as one of the worst experiences here at Wizard Press. Y'see, with this issue, we jumped on the multiple-edition bandwagon we have so wholeheartedly belittled in every issue before and since (yeah, that's hypocritical with a capital H), and we offered *Wizard* #17 with one of three different Christmas-themed cards: Rob Liefeld's Santa the Barbarian, Jim Lee's Holly Day or Todd McFarlane's Santa Todd.

As we learned, success was a double-edged sword. While we sold a whole mess o' copies, we pissed off every fan and retailer on the planet. We learned our lesson and never pulled any crap like that again. (Sidenote #4: When we approached Todd, Jim and Rob with the idea, they all liked it, though Todd later wanted no part of it due to its collector-mentality nature. He did keep his word, though, and gave us some card art, but he asked that his card be a stand-alone design from the other two to cut down on the "gotta own all three" mentality.)

Wizard #19

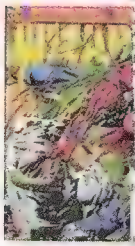
We really irritated Marvel when, in a "Publisher's Page" photo, Gareb asked an actor dressed in a Wolverine costume, "Did somebody fart?" We had Wolvie respond, "I'm the best there is at what I do." Marvel was not amused. Parents also weren't thrilled when we showed two Hustler cards in the "Wizard of Cards" column with black-barred private parts. They felt those images were pornographic, had no place in *Wizard* and were boycotting our book.

Wizard #20

We did a feature story on Sam Kieth

Look ridiculous? Sorry to skip ahead, but issue #20 held a rare gem. Send us a picture of your pet and we'll send you some pet vittles. Sounded good at the time. It lasted four months.

Another "Highnote" in *Wizard* history was #17. With three christmas chase cards, the only presents we deserved were slaps.



Yeah, Sam...er...we got your art right here. Oh, you want it *back*?

and his new Image creation, The Maxx. In need of art, we phoned Sam up and he sent us some color pics. After we scanned 'em, we filed the art away in some unorganized file cabinet, only to receive a call from a frantic Sam Kieth a few days later looking for the art. As it turns out, it was original page art, and was holding up the printing of his book. After a somewhat hectic search for the misfiled art, it was found, returned to Mr. Kieth and his book is *still* always late.

What also made issue #20 a book to remember was that it debuted a department called "Look Familiar?" in which we took photos of fans' pets and ran them in the magazine. If you spotted your pet in the mag, you wrote in and won dog food or something. To this day, I don't know what possessed us to run this travesty.

Wizard #21

Our first, and most successful #½ offer, *The Maxx* #½, made this our best-selling issue at the time. What also made this book fun to work on was *WildC.A.T.s* artist Jim Lee swinging by the office to pay Gareb a visit shortly after we had put the issue to bed. When Gareb was giving him a tour of the place, Jim noticed the designers looking at a completed opening photo spread of an interview with cover artist Jae Lee which featured a photo of Jae's face. Jim did a double-take, and pointed out that the photo was NOT that of Jae Lee.

Knowing Jim had a good sense of humor, we all laughed...and then realized he wasn't joking. (The photo was actually of artist Bernard Chang.)

In a mad scramble to find a true photo of Jae Lee before the issue went to press, a photo of Jae was unearthed. Verified by deputy editor Jim Lee, a new design was up and running in a matter of hours.

And to further prove how stupid we were, we printed the missing middle part of a Dave Sim interview, published back in *Wizard* #17. Y'see, we only ran the beginning and end of the story; we accidentally dropped out the middle. (Were we on the ball or what?)

Wizard #23

Mike Allred became the first "Wizard Profile." And, toss the confetti, this issue marked the first full-color price guide in *Wizard*, and the industry as a whole.

Thanks, Joe. But if you could give us something that we *won't* be yelled at for....

Wizard #24

Uh-oh, another problem with a major publisher concerned about the cover art. This time around we had artist Joe Quesada draw us a Batman cover featuring his final design for the post-"Knightfall" Dark Knight batsuit.

We learned DC was trying to keep that batsuit under wraps, as it would be a while till the "final" design would show up, so we ended up "censoring" the cover by covering most of Batman in shadow.

Wizard #25

We marked our silver 25th "Anniversary Issue" by slapping some silver ink on the cover, and by pissing off DC by showing last month's unedited Batman cover inside the issue.

It went like this: After we censored last month's cover, we got our hands on the latest Diamond *Previews*, which showcased *all* of Joe Quesada's rough sketches of the Batman costume that we chose not to run a month earlier. We slapped our foreheads, said the hell with it and ran our cover art in former Bat-artist Mike Manley's interview. DC wasn't thrilled, by any stretch.

Wizard #28

This issue's Simpsons cover, our first non-superhero cover, didn't go over big with the fans, though it did win us an honorable mention for Magazine and Booksellers' Cover of the Year award in the comic book category.

We also ran an exposé on what we thought was going to be the final fate of DC's *Sandman* (written and researched by frequent *Wizard* contributors William Christensen and Mark Seifert—and it was right on the money...*two years ago!*), and the ish debuted the first of our line of Creator Portfolio cards (which, in order, featured creator-owned characters Madman, Mordare, Grendel and Bone). They were fairly expensive to produce and, after an ice-cold fan response, they

HUNT OR BE HUNTED.

TUROK. IN SEPTEMBER.

37 & 38: ALL OUT WAR IN THE LOST LAND. TUROK VS. NAZIS.
BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN AND RAGS MORALES.

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were axed after the fourth card.

And least-importantly of all, *Wizard* #28 featured a fairly cheesy blow-in ad for *Wizard* rings. Yeah, you heard right—*Wizard* rings. For $260, you could be the proud owner of a gen-u-ine *Wizard* gold ring.

Wizard #29

The first of our annual year-end issues (which feature a past-year overview and coming-year focus), this 300-page $5 cover-priced behemoth marked one of the more successful issues we've done (and done by the seat of our pants, I might add).

Wizard #32

When Todd McFarlane called us up and asked if we wanted a jam cover of Spawn and Batman by him and Frank Miller, we crapped our collective shorts and said yes. What we got was an awesome piece of art (as long as you don't count the two moons), but we had a problem. While the artwork was cool and all, it left no room for a logo. Dozens of options were explored and dismissed, when Matt Tierney (former Art Director/Designer and current Creative Director) suggested we do a printed polybag. That way, you could throw any text needed on the cover (like a logo) onto the bag, and leave the cover as undisturbed as possible. We all gave Matt a big smooch, and the *Wizard* printed polybag was born. It looked so cool, we've been doing it ever since.

During this time, I finally realized that I could no longer devote as much time to "Magic Words," and I passed the torch to Jim McLauchlin, who at the time handled the letters page for our sister publication, *Collector's Sportslook*.

Wizard #42

When we had originally contacted Alex Ross, the popular *Marvels* artist, to do a gatefold cover of the '60s versions of classic Marvel villains, what we got was easily one of the best pieces of art we'd ever seen. Then a brainstorm hit us—why not have him do a triple gatefold of the classic Marvel heroes and add another panel to the villains cover? So we did, and wound up with two covers looking like a million bucks. Both covers failed to generate any serious buzz in the market, though.

Wizard #45

Our unannounced April Fools issue took most readers by surprise. Those who caught on got a good laugh, while others were left scratching their heads. Issue #45's highlight was the phony "Wizard Profile" with Derek D'Avril, a comic artist we invented and had a *Wizard* staffer pose as. We made him an obnoxious S.O.B., and showed some samples of his art that looked like a million bucks (the art was actually done by painter Marc Sasso). We received tons of mail stating that he's a talented guy, but a total ass. We even had some comic publishers (who'll remain nameless) call up asking for his number so they could hire him.

Wizard #46

After "Brutes & Babes" capped its 30-issue run in issue #41, we approached Greg Capullo about handling the gig, and he was tremendously enthusiastic about it. Shortly after our first phone call with Greg, we had his first column in our hands, and "Krash Course," the new art column, made its debut.

...And after a couple more cool issues, our story brings us to the very issue you're holding in your hands. Looking back over the past four-plus years, I've come to the conclusion that I owe all of you a thank you. Y'see, no matter what other sources may have claimed (that *Wizard* is "the cutting edge," or that we're the "trendmakers in the comics biz," etc.), the truth of the matter is that all we've done is listen to you. Your input is what made this magazine a success. Your input decides what's popular and what's crap. Your input is *Wizard*'s lifeblood. So before all the bells and whistles have stopped for *Wizard*'s big 50th issue hootenanny, take a bow, all of you. You're the ones who made this mag what it is, and on behalf of the *Wizard* staff, I thank you.

And now, on to the next 50.

Aside from being Wizard's Editor-in-Chief, Pat McCallum enjoys being the least-known (therefore, least-bothered) man in comics.

That's right! Limited-edition *Wizard* rings! Collect all three. Handsome and shiny they are. Three styles to choose from. Regular, Super and High Test.

AND NOW, ON TO THE NEXT 50. OH, THE DRESS... CHECK OUT THE BULLPEN ON PAGE 238.

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WE KNEW 'EM WHEN...

Profiles of the shining talents from the past four years who

BY MARC SHAPIRO

GREG CAPULLO

The money was fast. The work was easy. But *Spawn* penciler Greg Capullo dropped his advertising job in a New York minute when the telephone rang and it was Marvel Comics on the other line.

"My reaction? Total elation," remembers Capullo of that first assignment, *What If?* (vol. 2) #2, done in 1992. "As a kid, I mostly read Marvel comics, and thinking of working for them was a big dream. Then I got the call. They said, 'You're the guy. Let's go.' I said, 'Yeah! It happened, ma!'"

What happened after that call happened pretty fast. "I started out with a pretty doggy Marvel book called *Quasar*," recalls Capullo of what he describes as a quick climb, which now includes a steady diet of his "Krash Course" how-to-draw-comics column in these very pages. "But not too long after that, I got *X-Force* for Marvel. For me that was an immediate graduation to the top. Moving from *X-Force* over to *Spawn* for Image Comics was another catapult upward. I've been real fortunate to get the coolest of gigs. In fact, the only true low point has been watching my face slide down the *Wizard* Top Ten Hottest Artists list from time to time," he chuckles, tongue firmly planted in cheek.

But seriously, Capullo says his career is one "that just seems to be getting better and better."

"I never could have dreamed that things would end up going this well. If everything went kablooey tomorrow, it would still have been a fantastic experience and I would have no complaints." ■

JOE QUESADA

He has an FAO Schwarz retail skeleton clanking in his closet, a remnant from his old job as toy salesman. He also hauled barges as a lighting designer for Lee's Lighting Studio. But to hear *Ash* co-writer/penciler Joe Quesada laughingly explain it, he didn't start paying real heavy dues until he landed his first comic book job.

"I started out as a slave labor colorist at Valiant," says the always-irreverent Quesada, who is currently making great strides in putting his publishing company Event Comics on the map. "I was coloring several books in the Nintendo Comics line, which, in itself, could be considered torture. And, to top it all off, I got laid off."

But, when it's all said and done, Quesada looks back somewhat fondly on that early part of his Valiant experience. "Valiant said come on down, and two days later I quit my job at the lighting place. It wasn't so much a matter of jumping up and down and saying, 'Geez! Can I really make a living doing this?' It was more like, 'I'm making a living coloring comic books.'"

For the record, Quesada quickly jumped from coloring to penciling at Valiant with a one-page splash in *Captain N* before jumping to DC Comics for an inventory cover for a book called *Spelljammer*. Quesada, presently toying with his lifelong infatuation with music, heading up a band called Joe's Alibi, has come a long way since those Nintendo Comics days.

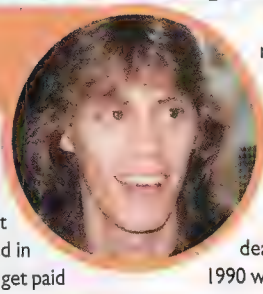
Almost immediately after the *Spelljammer* cover (and interior work on several issues), he was handed *The Ray* mini-series for DC, which led to stints on Marvel's *X-Factor* and Valiant's *Ninjak*.

"I would say the highest of the high points was when I was given the opportunity to redesign Batman with the Azrael/"Knightfall" story. I'd have to say that the *X-O Manowar* #0 cover for Valiant is one of my proudest pieces. Of course, starting my own company last year also ranks as one of my biggest moments."

Quesada turns humble when finally asked to sum up his comic book life to this point. "I haven't really paid much in the way of dues. In that sense, I've been truly blessed." ■

were yesterday's up-and-comers and are today's superstars

DALE KEOWN



It doesn't sound bad, but playing bass guitar in everything from thrash metal to country music bands was not really *Pitt* artist Dale Keown's cup of tea or, for that matter, even a rent payer. "It was tough. We played in a lot of real scuzzholes. I didn't get paid a lot, but that was fine with me because my rent was never a lot. In fact, things got so tight at one point that I was shacked up with this girl in her mother's house."

In between music gigs and contemplating work as a butcher's assistant, Keown happened into a comic book store and spotted a "Help Wanted: Inkers and Pencilers" note from Aircel Comics. His first job: *Samurai*. "I had the hunger and enthusiasm and I was really driven. And I really needed the job," he laughs. "I finished that first issue of *Samurai* two weeks before the deadline."

Over the course of a nearly 10-year comics career, Keown points to the interest expressed by Marvel and, later, Image as his highlights. "When Marvel acknowledges you as an artist it's a pretty big deal. *Incredible Hulk* #267 in 1990 was my big break and I really went nuts on that book. I ended up staying two and a half years on *Hulk*."

Keown then jumped off the Marvel boat to join the newly formed Image Comics to produce his *Pitt* comic in early 1993. "When the first issue I worked on sold almost a million copies, I really freaked out."

Keown claims that his first reaction upon getting the *Samurai* assignment is ultimately how he sums up his career to date.

"Ten years ago I wondered if I could actually make a living with my drawing. Ten years later I'm thrilled to find out that I can." ■

MIKE ALLRED

For Mike Allred, the past four years have been like a dream come true. But the comic book mind behind Dark Horse Comics' *Madman Comics* also knows dropping everything in favor of the paneled page was a literal role of the dice.

"Dropping what I had in order to do comics was definitely a risk," the writer/artist agrees. "But it was a risk that I'm glad I took."

A risk made all the more dicey by the fact that Allred was already well-established as a TV news anchor and reporter in both the United States and Europe. "The reporting basically started out as a fun thing before it turned into a career." But he decided to take the plunge when Comico offered him a monthly contract. "That was the deciding factor," he recalls. "That contract was the thing that said, 'Hey, I might be able to make a career out of this.'"

But when Allred's first assignment, *Jaguar Tales*, went belly up along with Comico, Allred went back to some unfavorable labor. "I was selling T-shirts with my own designs on them. It got real scary for a while. I came close to bagging groceries or having to apply for a local TV anchor job."

Fate stepped in with an offer from Epic Comics for a book called *Everyman*. After Tundra publisher Kevin Eastman saw his work on that series and his early Madman designs, Allred followed up with the three-ish-apiece *Madman* and *Madman Adventures* for the company, which led to the current bi-monthly *Madman Comics*. "*Madman* has easily been my high point in comics to date," he reports. "The first series meeting with the critical acclaim that it did and winning the Harvey Award for Best New Series was fantastic. But probably the most exciting thing was being invited to join the Legend imprint last year, which resulted in meeting fellow members Frank Miller and Geof Darrow."

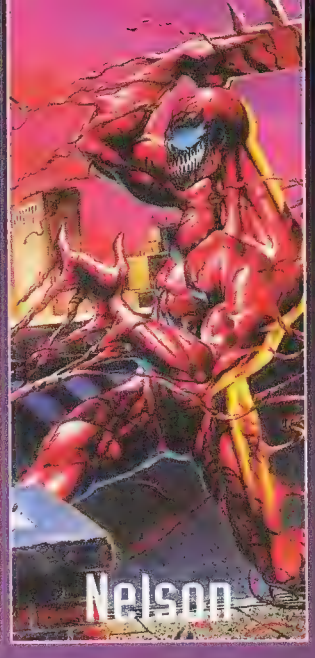
Allred, who says he's wild about comics and films, is optimistic about his future. "I've had the ups and downs and ups again. At this point, it can only get better." ■

ALEX ROSS

"Nobody hunted me down," chuckles artist Alex Ross about the mythic first call that never came. "I had to hunt them down."

The 25-year-old Ross, who was doing storyboarding for a commercial advertising firm, took the bull by the horns when he walked into Now Comics with a potent portfolio and was promptly offered the reins of *Terminator: The Burning Earth*. "I definitely didn't go through the proper channels to get into this business. I always considered myself a guy who would drive his own ideas in. But I jumped at *Terminator* because I wanted to have my first comic book out while I was still in my teens."

Ross soon made the much-coveted leap to the big time as the art-guy-for-hire at Marvel with *Marvels* and at DC with the upcoming *Kingdom Come*, and it is at these companies that he



No other cards compare.

You've seen their outstanding work in Fleer Ultra Spider-Man... now these four remarkable artists have been chosen to create 1995 Marvel Masterpieces.

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feels he has done his best work to date. "*Marvels* definitely broke me out. [Writer] Kurt Busiek and I hit chords with just about everybody. We broke through the prevailing idea that painted covers were not for kids and that it was not possible that they could hit the average superhero buying market with something this good. *Sandman Mystery Theatre Annual* #1, which I did last year, is what I consider my best work. It gave me the chance to do black-and-white painted work, and it really turned out well."

Ross considers his career to date. "I'm your typical overnight success that took five years to happen. I've been extremely fortunate to be at the right place at the right time." ■

JIM BALENT

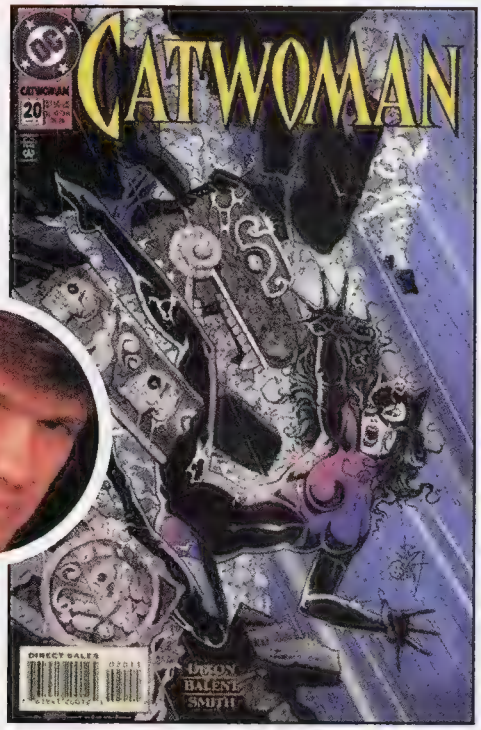
"I buried 32 people," laughs *Catwoman* penciler Jim Balent when describing what has to go down in the books as one of comicdom's strangest forms of dues-paying. "I was a grave digger, and I was actually a lot happier with that job than I was with the job that came after that, which was a storyboard artist for an audio-visual company."

Dues-paying stopped when Balent received a phone call from what was the former Malibu Comics imprint Eternity Comics, which handed him his first assignment, a pin-up for its *Ex-Mutants* title. "I was thrilled to death when I got the call," remembers Balent with no small amount of satisfaction. "I thanked them, and asked when they wanted it, how much do I get and when do I get the check?"

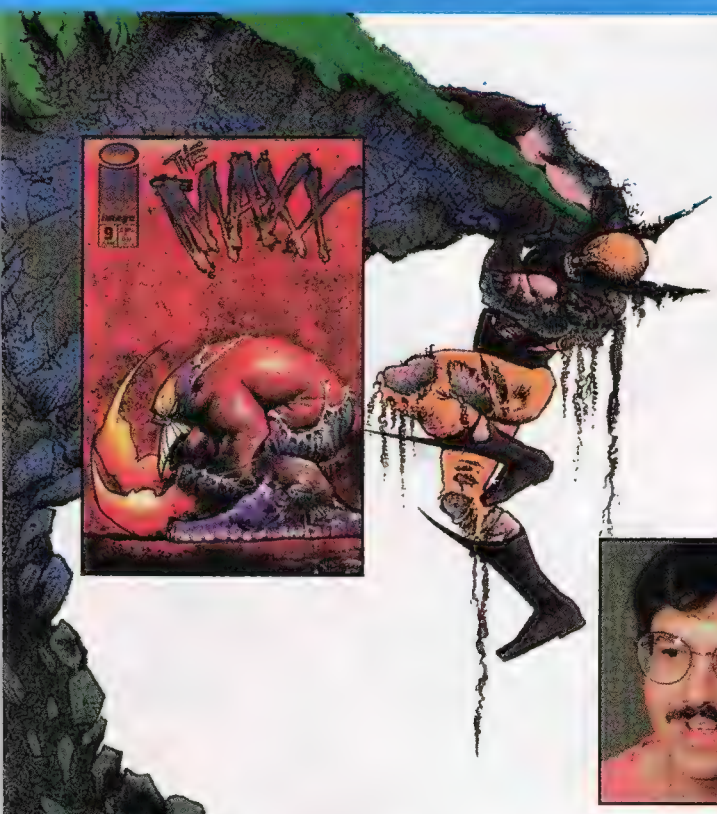
Not only did he get the check, but he soon found his career going literally batty. Getting his start on *Green Lantern Corps Quarterly* in 1993 "was important to me because it was the first time I was being given work on a fairly consistent basis.

"Obviously, getting the monthly *Catwoman* for DC Comics in '93 was a high point," Balent continues. "So was getting a shot at doing Batman in *Detective Comics Annual* #6. Almost everybody's dream in the industry is to draw Batman, so for me to land an assignment like that without having a whole lot of experience was fantastic."

Looking back on his career, *Catwoman*'s current penciler credits sweat and sacrifice to "make my dreams come true. This is what I wanted in my life, so I did what I had to do to make it happen." ■



SAM KIETH



The Maxx plotter/artist Sam Kieth, by his own estimation, was "one of those annoying people who was supported through my struggles by my wife." But Kieth, currently enjoying the success of his Image comic and MTV cartoon *The Maxx*, claims that was probably the toughest thing to deal with.

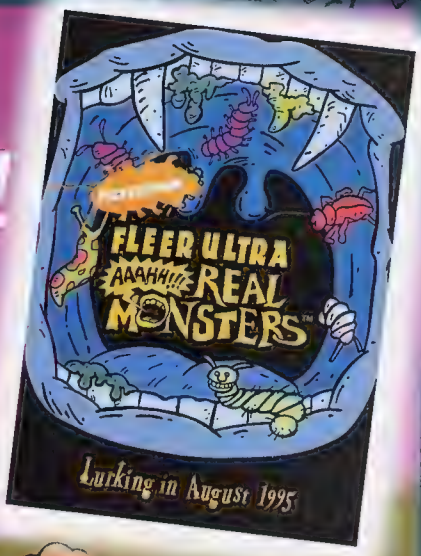
"It caused relationship woes and it almost ended the relationship," says a candid Kieth. "If I hadn't gained the capacity to pay her back financially and otherwise, I don't think the marriage would have lasted."

Sounds like a bummer, but Kieth's story reached a happy ending when he received a phone call from Now Comics which resulted in a 10-page assignment for something called *Max the Hare*. "I did the penciling, inking and writing for $10 a page, and I felt like I had really made it. I was doing backflips."

The comic gymnastics continued with a guest-artist job on *Incredible Hulk* #368 in 1990. "That book got the people in the industry talking a little bit, because it was an issue where everybody sort of had shadows. After that it went back to being a normal book. The *Marvel Comics Presents* #85 with Wolverine also was a high point for me. There was also a low-run graphic novel called *Epicurus the Sage* from Piranha Press that a lot of people haven't seen that I'm real proud of."

Kieth, whose animated *Maxx* has been picked up for a second season by MTV and is currently wrapping up #20 of the comic series, says his career to date has been good. "Real good. Hopefully it will get much better." ■

A Card Set Packed with Laughs and Gasps!



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BILL TUCCI

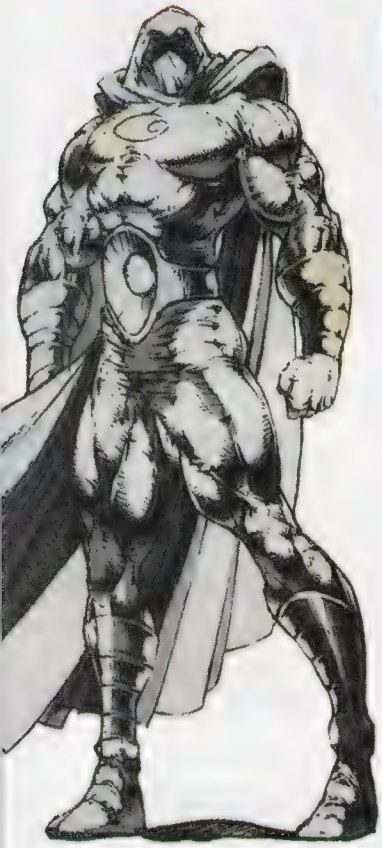
Wanna know how rough it can get? Let Bill Tucci brushstroke his bleak pre-*Shi* picture. "I was a maintenance man for this big corporation, and it was the worst. My job was to clean the restrooms and empty out the garbage in the cafeteria."

Tucci eventually escaped those janitorial blues, although he was still eking out a living illustrating T-shirts long after the now-classic *Shi* #1 hit stores in early '94. But even when the writer/artist was literally on the financial ropes, he was deadset on living the American Dream.

"I just knew I was going to do this and that my making it in comics was just meant to be," he says, straddling a cliché or two. "I knew that hard work and persistence would eventually make things happen."

When addressing his short career's high points, Tucci is quick to point out that "I don't believe that I've reached my apex yet."

"I think the hump that really tested my mettle was *Shi* #4. I recolored that sucker three times. Everything that could go wrong with a book did go wrong. It was just one problem after another. *Shi* #4 was like my D-Day land. That book was my Normandy Beach. I'm still continuing to take some hits, but it ultimately looks like we're going to win the war." ■



STEPHEN PLATT

Want to know how Stephen Platt got here? Blame it on *Wizard*. "It was issue #25," the *Prophet* artist recalls. "Jim Lee's Deathblow cover really grabbed me. That's when I decided I really wanted a career in comics."

But the artist's career came with a heavy load worthy of just about any Muddy Waters tune. "I was carrying a full load in my third year of college and working part-time as a theater usher when I got a call from Marvel Comics with the offer to do a 32-page Moon Knight story in four eight-page installments for *Marvel Comics Presents*."

His reaction? "I was ecstatic! I just kept thinking about being 12 years old and drawing comics. It was like a childhood dream come true. It felt like Christmas."

Those particular pages of Moon Knight have yet to see print, but don't cry for Platt. He was immediately bumped up to a regular shot with *Moon Knight* #55, which remains one of his highlights during his short two-year life on the pro comics planet.

"Highlights? Let me see. The *Marvel Comics Presents* [work], even though it has never seen the light of day, because the whole experience was so exciting and terrifying at the same time. That first issue of *Moon Knight*, because it was my first regular title, and *Prophet* #5, because it was my first Image title."

As to Platt's own personal barometer? "As a professional I don't feel like I've accomplished a whole hell of a lot. I'm thankful for the success that I've had. But damn—it's all happened so very quickly!" ■

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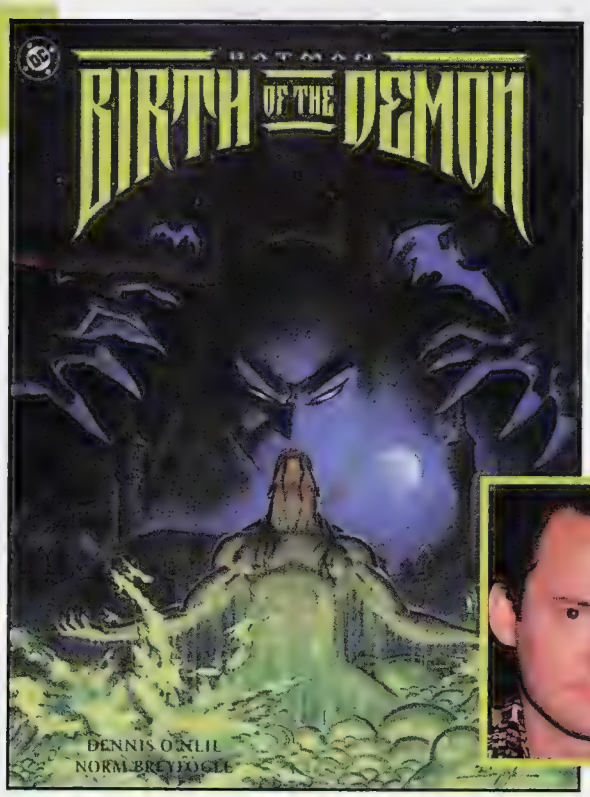
NORM BREYFOGLE

Years ago, writer/artist Norm Breyfogle was paying the rent as a technical illustrator at Vandenberg Air Force Base. It wasn't flipping burgers at McDonald's, but it might as well have been. "It was a peon job," reflects the artist of Valiant's *Outcast*. "It wasn't a bad job, but it wasn't what I wanted, so whenever I had a break I was drawing comics."

And making the usual comic convention rounds, during which he came to the attention of Mike Friedrich of Star*Reach Productions, who liked his material and promised he'd find him work. In the meantime, Breyfogle's job search brought him a couple of assignments at DC's *New Talent Showcase* in 1984, but he was also going through some personal soul-searching at that time.

"I was going through some major changes in my life. My mother had just died and I didn't even have a permanent address. But when those DC assignments came up, I was literally shouting, screaming and jumping for joy. Then Mike from Star*Reach started getting me work, and I was off."



And into a career that has produced some memorable creative moments. "The 'Bob Violence' backup for First's *American Flagg!* was my first regular job. I learned a lot doing Eclipse's *Whisper*. It was a real stressful learning experience.

"Artistically, I was real happy with the issues of *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* I had done and the *Birth of the Demon* graphic novel. Ultimately, *Prime* for Malibu's Ultraverse was the big break for me. I had gone from a major publisher to an independent one, and that's when my career actually started to take off."

Breyfogle downplays his success to this point.

"My status has definitely changed. My career to this point is promising, but to be perfectly honest, not completely satisfying yet." ■

JEFF SMITH

He was closing in on 30. He was flipping burgers at McDonald's. *Bone* writer/artist Jeff Smith recalls that it wasn't pretty. "I was working the grill. No matter how many times I washed that uniform, it always smelled. Dogs used to follow me around when I was wearing it."

The odor and the dogs finally got to Smith, who started his own animation company that, truth be known, was not really fulfilling. "The truth is I really wanted to draw these Bone characters. I said, 'I'm going to turn 30 and I'm not doing what I want to do.'" Smith entered the comic book arena with *Bone* less than a year later. "It was a real long haul," he recalls. "At first nobody knew about *Bone*, then word of mouth started kicking in around issue #8, and by #12 things had really reached critical mass."

"*Bone* has been the high point," he reflects. "There've been no others. It's all been one really great rush. Looking back I'd have to say *Bone* #16 is the book I'm most proud of. It was done with almost no dialogue and a lot of lightning, thunder and atmosphere. A lot of people didn't care much for it, but it was a big deal to me because I was able to pull off things I didn't know I could pull off in print. Seeing *Bone* published in foreign languages has also been a big thrill."

As to his fruitful and eventful career to date, Smith sums it up this way: "Persistence. Wanting to do something so bad you can taste it. And then doing it." W

Marc Shapiro, who wrote our profile on Vertigo writers in Wizard *#49, enjoys cheese.*

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Wizard & Marvel Comics Present:

YOUR STAIRWAY TO STARDOM CONTEST

FEATURING CAPTAIN AMERICA

Y'know, we do a lot of art-related contests 'round these parts. Every month, we see that our readers are a bunch of truly talented artists. But what about writers? There's just got to be a ton of you out there in readerland who can write a comic story, too. Well, this month we're calling you out to show off your talents, with no less a personality than everyone's favorite Sentinel of Liberty, Captain America, to help you along.

This contest is sponsored by the MARVEL COMICS **folks,**
some people who know a thing or two about writin' funnybooks.

Write an issue of CAPTAIN AMERICA!

What You Gotta Do:

You've got to show us how great a writer you are by sending us a plot for a Captain America mini-comic. Your plot should include Captain America as the focus (of course), and can also include any other Marvel Comics characters you wish.

So, many of you may wonder, what the heck *is* a comic book plot? What should it look like? What should it do? Well, it should be clearly written out (preferably typewritten), and it should do the following:

- Introduce the characters (Who's in the comic?)
- Establish their situation (What are they doing?)
- Introduce a conflict (Enter: The villain! Or...the crisis!)
- Build suspense (There's something at stake here!)
- Reach a climax (We have a winner!)
- Show a resolution (How does all this affect the characters?)

Do these things, and do them well, and you could climb the Stairway to Stardom to become a famous fancy-pants comic book writer! We'll tell you exactly how...

...OVER HERE!

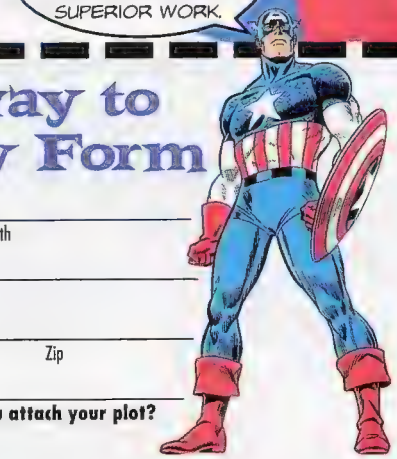
We're going to pick the 11 best plots and forward them to the Marvel editors. They're going to pick the best of the best, and that plot will be scripted and drawn and made into a future Captain America *Wizard* mini-comic! If you're the lucky Grand Prize winner, you'll receive credit as the plotter of the book, and since those wacky guys at Marvel are soooo nice, they'll even pay you $400! Buy all the beef jerky you want!

RUNNERS-UP (10): The ten other lucky readers whose plots make the first cut will each receive a copy of *Avengers Masterworks,* featuring the return of Captain America. Oh yeah, to inspire you to try, try again, each copy will be autographed by Stan "The Man" Lee, a guy who knows a thing or two about writing stories.

THE LEGALESE

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Marvel Comics, their immediate families and the Red Skull. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your plot entry. Mail each entry separately to: Stairway to Stardom Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Hey! Quit reading the legal text! Haven't you started yet? Writin' plots is tough work! Hop to it! **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by October 31, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected, based on quality and creativity among all properly completed entries, by Wizard Press and Marvel Comics.

For a list of winners, available after November 30, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Stairway to Stardom Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.



Fill this sucker out, put it an envelope, attach your plot and send the whole shebang to: Stairway to Stardom Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Official Stairway to Stardom Entry Form

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ **Did you attach your plot?**

Deadline is October 31, 1995.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEND AN S. A. S. E. TO MOTOWN ANIMATION, 5750 WILSHIRE BLVD. STE. 300 LOS ANGELES CA. 90036 or CALL US AT 213/ 634. 3430

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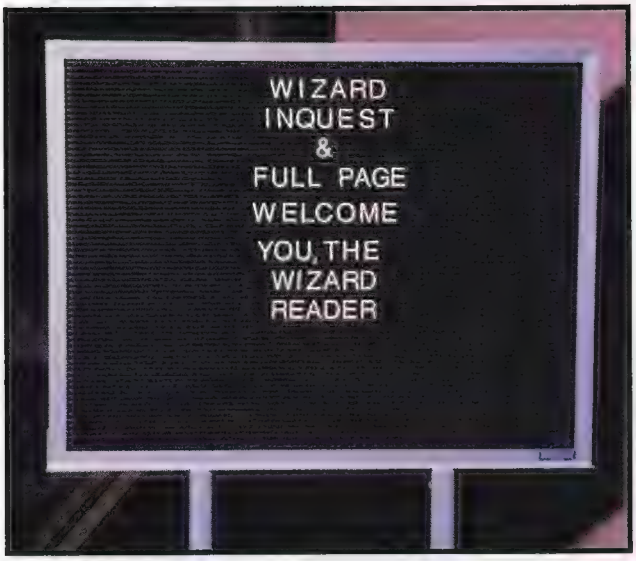

OUR TOUR BEGINS WITH OUR COURTEOUS SECURITY CHECK FROM DONATO. FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION ,OF COURSE.

EVERY TIME I go to a convention or a comic store, the one question I'm always asked (right after "Where the hell did you get that ugly shirt?") is "So, what's it like to work at *Wizard*?" No answer that I've ever been able to give has really seemed adequate. How do you describe the obelisk-sized head of Marc Wilkofsky? Can words truly portray the over-the-top zaniness that is the Groovy Ghoulies? You can tell people that Elvis' love child works in your library, but until they see it, will they believe it?

That's when it hit me—say it with flowers! Since I realized that a Ray of Sunshine bouquet for all our readers would cause some budget problems, I decided to say it with pictures instead. And if a picture is truly worth a thousand words, then I guess this'll be the biggest article I've ever written.

So read it. Get to know what happens behind the scenes. Memorize our faces for future police line-ups. Immerse yourself in the funky musk that is the *Wizard* crew. Then—and only then—will you be able to decide if you really should pay any mind to the men and women behind the curtain...

IN THEIR CIVILIAN IDENTITIES, THE GHOULIES ARE DAN REILLY...

...AND BOB MARSHALL, KEEPER OF THE CRYPT AND THE WORLD'S MOST CLUTTERED DESK.

OUR NEW ONLINE EDITOR, BUDDY SCALERA, IS FAR TOO HAPPY TO WORK HERE. HE HASN'T BEEN HERE LONG ENOUGH.

MARC WILKOFSKY LIKES TO THINK HE LOOKS LIKE DEAN CAIN. WE ALLOW HIM THIS ILLUSION...

...JUST LIKE WE ALLOW ANDREW KARDON TO OCCASIONALLY CRAWL OUT OF HIS OFFICE.

DON'T MESS WITH THE WELL-ARMED ART DEPARTMENT!
DIE, JACKASS!
ARLENE SO, MATT TIERNEY AND GODZILLA TAKE NO PRISONERS!
BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
SPAM
JOVIAL ART DIRECTOR BRAD FOUNTAIN WEARS HIS EMOTIONS ON HIS SLEEVE, AND HIS LUNCH ON HIS CHEST.
SSHHHH! BE VEWY VEWY QUIET... STEVE BLACKWELL IS HUNTING QUALITY HAIR CARE PRODUCTS.
LIKE I SAID, THE SON OF ELVIS DWELLS HERE AT WIZARD. JUST CHECK OUT THAT EERIE GLOW!
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THE WORLD OF DARKNESS

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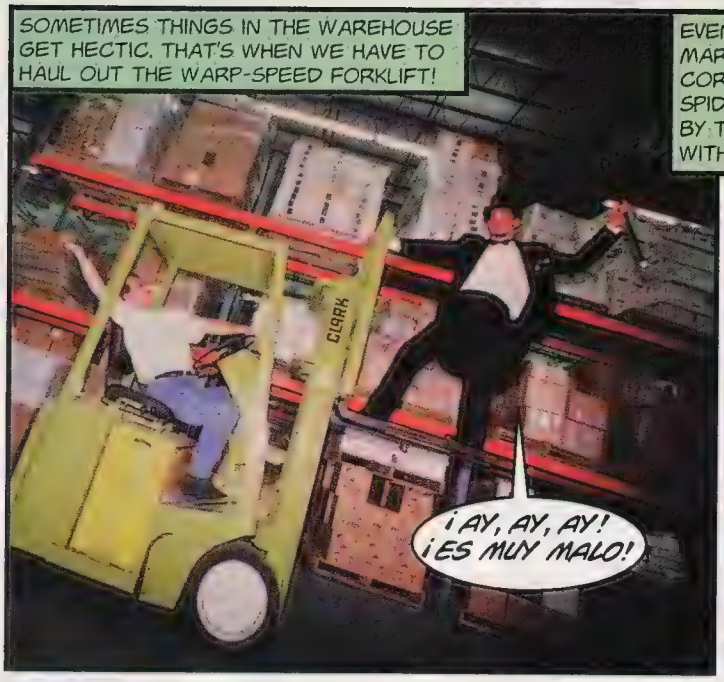


FIRST ROW (seated, left to right): Phil Colligan, Steve Zaret, Mark Greenbaum, Karen Evora, Chandra Dunitz, Brian Nelson, Maria Capello, Jennifer Winheim, Brad Fountain, Brenda Cook. **SECOND ROW** (kneeling): Jeff Hannes, Scott Gramling, Kathleen Doherty, Kathy Newman, Mike Searle, Marc Wilkofsky, Matt Tierney. **THIRD ROW** (standing): Martha Scheidegger, Tom McKelvey, Arlene So, Bob Marshall, Brian Cunningham, Joe Yanarella, Gareb Shamus, Robin Ramos, Dan Reilly, Buddy Scalera, Brit Byrnes. **BACK ROW:** Stephen Shamus, Fred Pierce, Paul Rolnick, Mercedes Cabo, Mike Fasolo, Bunny, Pat McCallum, Andrew Kardon, Ben Todd, Steve Blackwell, Jeff Petrik, Marty Stever. **NOT PICTURED:** Francy Castro, Patrick Daniel O'Neill, Alison James, Karen Lee James, Jason Kelley, Michael Roberts, Kate Torpey, Ed DuPré, Raka Raychaudhuri, Doug Goldstein, Jon Warren, William Christensen and Mark Seifert.

WELL, THAT'S ABOUT IT—a day in the life of *Wizard*. You've seen the good, the bad and most of the ugly. About all you missed was the conga line, the boat races, the supervillain-flunky training academy and the nude Reddi-Whip wrestling. We'll be sure to show you all that next time around. Promise.

So if you ever happen to find yourself in the greater Congers, N.Y., metroplex, we recommend you stay the hell away! We offer no guarantees as to what might happen to you if you show up, but one thing's for sure—it's bound to be wacky. W

After looking at these pictures, Jim McLauchlin realized that he has a cheesy grin, a bad mustache and could stand to lose 15 pounds.

Wizard: The Guide to Comics and Acclaim™ Entertainment Present:

THE THIRD ANNUAL WIZARD SCAVENGER HUNT!

Y'know, with the possible exception of a banana cream pie fight between drunken dwarves, there ain't nothin' in the world more fun than a Scavenger Hunt. So we're havin' another one.

But this ain't no regular scavenger hunt. No siree, Bob. We ain't gonna make you find a thimble and a mayonnaise jar lid and place a laurel wreath upon your brow if you hand 'em to us. No, this hunt is a *lot* more challenging. And the rewards are a *lot* greater.

We're going to challenge you to scour the four corners of the Earth (and here we thought the world was round) to come up with the funkiest batch of goodies you can shake a Popsicle stick at. Go the distance, and you could walk away with thousands of dollars worth of amazing comic and video game goodies. Just turn the page and look for yourself.

Turn the page for a closer look

CONTEST

Put on your best dress, Mary, and wake up the neighbors, 'cause a-scavenging we will go!

Prizes

Grand Prize (1): One scavenger who gets the top point total will receive the biggest freakin' home video game system out there—The Sega Saturn video game system!!—and a copy of *Separation Anxiety*, Acclaim's brand-spankin' new Venom/Spider-Man/Carnage video game. The Grand Prize winner will also receive Jasmine (from *John Byrne's Next Men*) and Bone porcelain figurines, plus Joker and King Kong model kits, just 'cause we're nice guys. And the Grand Prize winner will also receive...

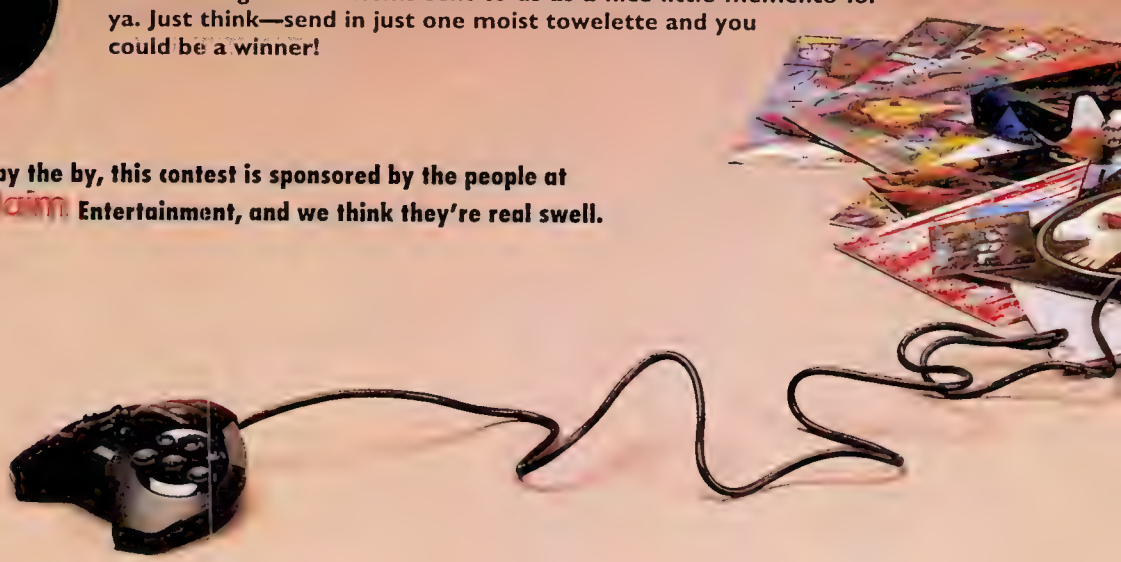
The Ultimate *Wizard* Fan Kit! What's that, you ask? Well, it's a little box o' love that we've put together which includes 20 super-keen comics—we're talking autographed stuff, tour books, variant covers, premium logos, the works! It'll also include a *Wizard* baseball hat, funkified *Wizard* sunglasses, a Chromium *Wizard* Lady Death trading card signed by Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes and a complete run of *all* the standard *Wizard* #1/2 issues. Now *that's* a ton of unbridled comic joy! Whew!

First Prize (20): The next twenty top point scorers will receive a copy of the spiffy-as-all-heck *Separation Anxiety* game and The Ultimate *Wizard* Fan Kit! That's the 20 great comics, the hat, the shades, the autographed Lady Death card and *all* the standard *Wizard* #1/2 issues. Still enough to make any comic geek worth his backing boards go into a slobbering frenzy!

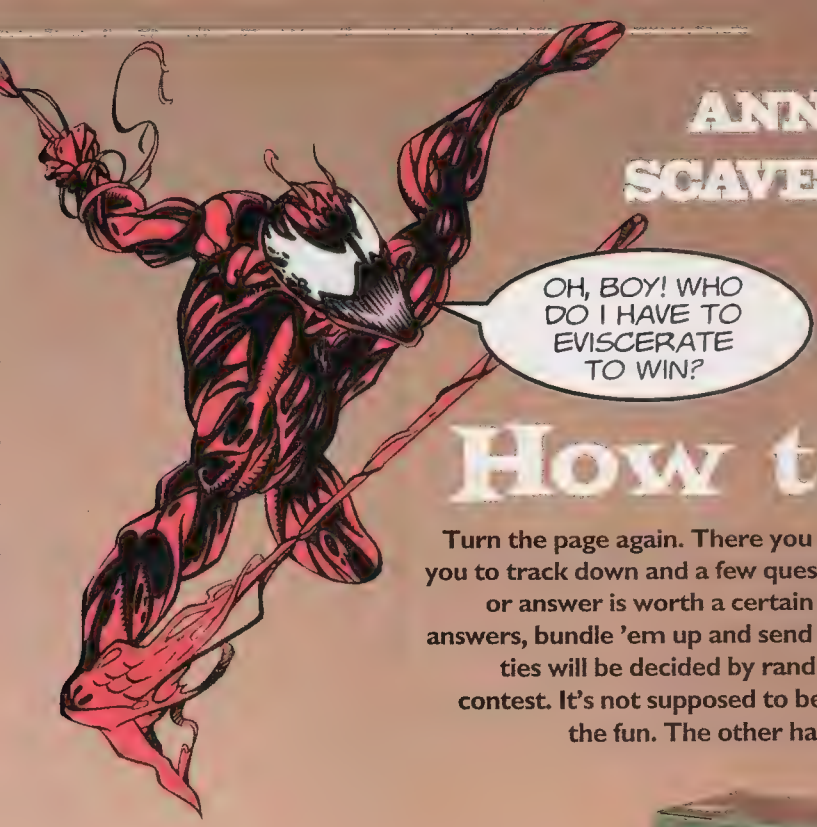
Consolation Prize (80): The next eighty top point scorers will receive The Ultimate *Wizard* Fan Kit! You've read about that thing twice now. You know what's in it. So turn the page and hop to it! Time's a-wastin'!

The Randomizer (1): The lucky sender of one entry chosen completely at random will receive a complete run of *Wizard*, issues #1-#50, a Sega Game Gear color portable video game system and a whole slew of the Scavenger Hunt items sent to us as a nice little memento for ya. Just think—send in just one moist towelette and you could be a winner!

Oh, by the by, this contest is sponsored by the people at Acclaim Entertainment, and we think they're real swell.



THE THIRD ANNUAL *WIZARD* SCAVENGER HUNT!



How to Play

Turn the page again. There you will find a list of items that we need you to track down and a few questions we need answered. Each item or answer is worth a certain point value. Get the goods, find the answers, bundle 'em up and send 'em in. Top point total wins, and all ties will be decided by random drawing. No, it's not the easiest contest. It's not supposed to be. But tracking this stuff down is half the fun. The other half? Winning the nifty prizes below...

Items and Points

Here's what you're after... and what it's all worth!

1) A Yellow Pages page from your local phone book (2)
2) Bow tie (3)
3) Guitar string (3)
4) Piece of sandpaper, anywhere between 100 and 600 grit (3)
5) Something with a picture of Scooby-Doo on it (3)
6) Kazoo (3)
7) Weeble toy (10)
8) 1974 Topps Creature Feature card (5)
9) "Do Not Disturb" doorknob sign (3)
10) Sheet music to any *Sesame Street* song (7)
11) One-page printed download from Wizard World on America Online (5)
12) Bizarre listing for a TV talk show (3)
13) Nerf ball (3)
14) Fast food restaurant placemat (2)
15) Fortune cookie fortune with the word "happiness" in it (3)
16) Moist towelette (or "Wetnap," if you prefer) (3)
17) Business card from a comic book store (3)
18) Cereal box toy (2)
19) A bendy straw (2)
20) Tinker Toy part (3)
21) One good, clean sock (hopefully the one we lost in the last wash) (3)
22) Political campaign button (2)
23) Flier or coupon from a car wash (2)
24) Any official Department of Motor Vehicles form (2)
25) A photo YOU took of someone with a big ol' flabby butt (5)
26) Plastic farm animal toy (2)
27) A cork (2)
28) A refrigerator magnet (2)
29) Ticket stub from any sporting event (2)
30) A Pixie Stix! Flavored sugar—what a concept! (2)
31) Anything scratch 'n' sniff (no glue) (3)
32) Wooden nickel (3)
33) Mini-football helmet, any team (3)
34) Hot Wheels or Matchbox car with a number on it (3)
35) 3-D or Valiant Vision glasses (3)
36) A Micro-Machine toy (3)
37) Mattress tag that says, "Do not remove." Oooh, lawbreaker! (3)
38) Postage stamp from any country, with a picture of a fish on it (2)
39) SkyBox Simpsons POG (2)
40) Two-colored mini-golf ball (3)
41) A map of the state of Arkansas (2)
42) A Mad Libs book (5)
43) Any water pistol, empty, barrel less than three inches long (2)
44) A cartoon or comic character bookmark (2)
45) Toothpick in a paper wrapper, not plastic (2)
46) Banner from any newspaper called the *Journal* (2)
47) Bowling alley score sheet, used (3)
48) Lobster bib with a picture of a lobster on it (2)
49) Keychain shaped like a stop sign (3)
50) Metal Monopoly piece (2)
51) A picture of a celebrity in pajamas (2)
52) One latex glove (don't ask why we want 'em) (2)
53) Piggy bank shaped like a pig (3)
54) A *Super Friends* comic book (3)
55) No. 2 Ticonderoga pencil (2)
56) Picture postcard with the name of a city on the front (3)
57) A blue Uno card (2)
58) Any newspaper cartoon (2)
59) Blue Sharpie fine point permanent marker (2)
60) Little umbrella thing that they put in those fruity drinks (3)
61) Ziploc bag, unused (2)
62) Empty coin roll, any denomination (2)
63) Any Crayola crayon whose name is at least three words (2)
64) Hair scrunchie (2)
65) Post-it note with a message on it (2)
66) Picture of the full band U2 (2)
67) "No smoking" sign (2)
68) Any instruction sheet written in at least two languages (2)
69) Any 8-track tape, blank or pre-recorded (5)
70) Grocery store receipt (2)
71) What kind of animals were Tennessee Tuxedo? (2)
72) ...and Chumley? (3)
73) What was the name of the big of Dragon in *The Hobbit*? (4)
74) What's the name of the little guy in the Hawaiian Punch ads? (5)
75) Which four Marvel heroes make cameo appearances in the game *Venom/Spider-Man: Separation Anxiety*! (1 point each)

75 items...
213 points total!
Go for it, you huntin' nut!

SEND ALL ENTRIES TO:
Scavenger Hunt III
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

Deadline is DECEMBER 1, 1995! GOOD LUCK!

The Legalese

These rules you should actually read!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Acclaim Entertainment, their immediate families and Rush Limbaugh (and anybody who looks like him). Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on a 3-by-5-inch index card and enclose with your Scavenger Hunt entry. Each entry must be mailed in a single secure package or large envelope. Each package will be considered a separate entry. Small items such as a postage stamp or Monopoly piece should be secured to a 3-by-5-inch index card to prevent loss or damage during shipping. All Scavenger Hunt questions must be answered on one single separate sheet of paper. Mail each entry separately to: Scavenger Hunt, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920. Enter as many times as you like. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. The cash equivalent of the prize will be offered. Prizes are awarded to the name of contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law or a [illegible] the purposes and rules hereof. We're gonna [illegible] spend it on the three "B's;" booze, broads and [illegible]. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by DECEMBER 1, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible [illegible] determined by the number of valid entries [illegible]

For a list of winners, available after January 2, 1996, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Scavenger Hunt Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

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FIGURE THIS

A look at some statistics involved in *Wizard*'s wild history!

Compiled by Marc Wilkofsky

NOTE: All these stats are only up through issue #49 (unless otherwise noted), and didn't include the various Price Guides in the tally (Whaddaya think we are—nuts?).

THE WORLD OF WORDS:

• Number of times *Wizard* writers used the words: *hot* (**1,358**), *cool* (**760**), *comic* (**18,534**), *Wizard* (**6,714**), *macho* (**36**), *origin* (**264**), *X-Men* (**3,065**), *Spider-Man* (**2,998**), *Spawn* (**896**), *new direction* (**20**)

MACHO WIZARD COMIC COOL! hot origin

COVER STATS

(All the following cover stats include variant editions):

• Characters who have appeared on most covers: **Spider-Man** (6 times if you count this issue), **Wolverine and Spawn** (5), **Batman** (4)

• Number of Image covers: **18**

• Number of covers with X-Men characters: **14**

• Number of covers with a character wearing/doing something with purple Wizard hat/clothes: **11**

• Artist who's done the most *Wizard* covers: **Bart Sears** (three of which were under the pseudonym Wittman)

• Number of men featured on covers: **197**

• Number of women featured on covers: **38**

• Covers with most characters: **#31** (Legend Jam, 19), **#42A** (Marvels good guys, 18), **#28** (The Simpsons, 17)

OTHER COOL STUFF:

• Most-represented states in Magic Words: **California** (113 letters), **New York** (102), **Texas** (53)

• Least-represented states in Magic Words: **Montana** (0 letters); **DE**, **UT**, **WY** (1 each)

• Three best-selling regular issues of *Wizard*: **#35** (Platt cover; best overall), **#41** (Year-Ender, X-Men cover), **#45** (Cyberforce)

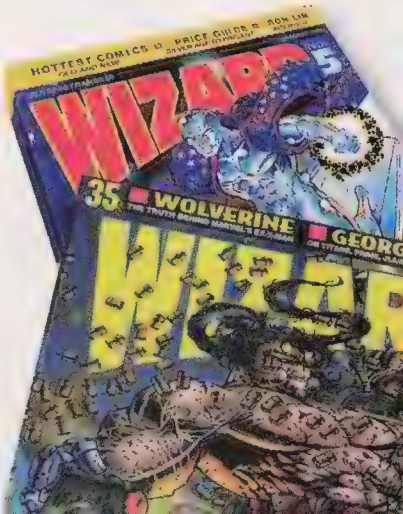
• Worst-selling regular issue of *Wizard*: **#5** (Silver Surfer)

• Total number of pages subscribers would have received if they'd gotten all issues to date: **9,984** (including this one)

• Person most often interviewed in a feature: **Peter David (5 times)**, **Jim Shooter (4)**

Favorite Guest Stars: Peter David (5)

Jim Shooter (4)



In 1993, Wizards of the Coast revolutionized card games with MAGIC The Gathering.

This summer, WotC's Alter Ego™ Design Group will redefine roleplaying with

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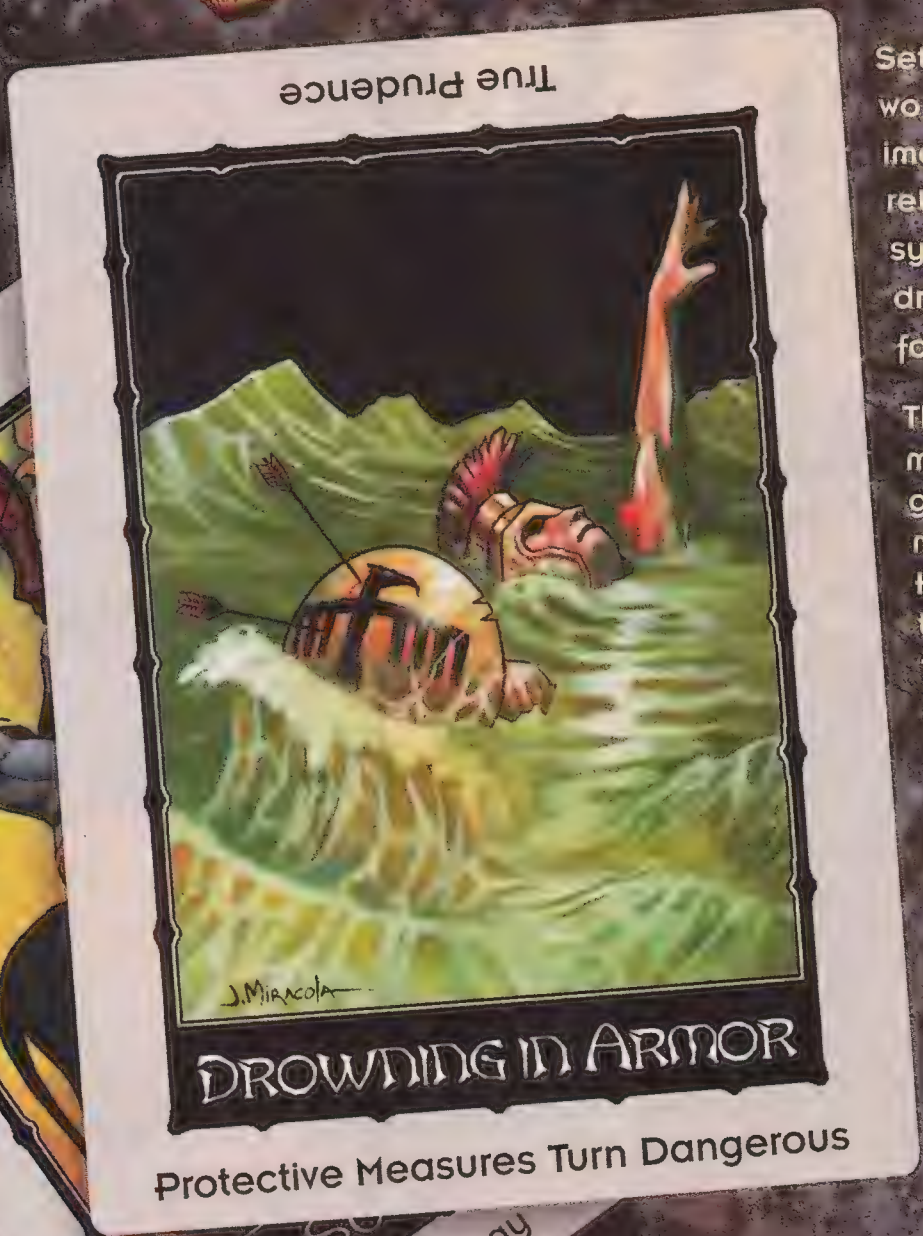

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Wizards of the Coast

Alter Ego

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Cheese Whiz

Up close and personal with *Wizard* Publisher Gareb Shamus

Thinking about *Wizard: The Guide to Comics* in preparation for this interview, I have come to the curious and painful understanding of the vital role that *Wizard* has played in this industry in just a few short years. From the consumer base to the retailer to the freelance creative community to the very top levels of corporate suits 'n' ties, plucky little Gareb and his merry band of boys have done quite a lot to change the comics industry around.

Wizard took its shots, but always with an attitude of letting the readers think they were hip and in on the jokes, as opposed to the butt of them (which were usually at the expense of the characters, creators and companies, who were always playfully smacked around).

Wizard completely captured a huge section of the audience that was waiting to be tapped by a "fanzine"—the kids ages 8 to 16. Most other publications on comics were written by adults and intended for adults. *Wizard* showed them that fans wanted to read about the things they cared about: not just comics, but cards, toys, back issue prices and the like.

The magazine sells over a quarter-million copies a month. It is the Bible to many readers. The fortunes of entire companies have risen or fallen because *Wizard* made it so.

By Fabian Nicieza

Photo's by Paul Schiraldi

Yeah, I've got my problems with *Wizard*. But one thing I've always made clear in my conversations with Gareb and my peers is that I honestly respect what Gareb and his editorial crew have done over the last five years, even when I disagreed with it. *Wizard* has *always* been a professionally packaged, smartly sold, well-designed and $ucce$$ful product that, from its inception, has aimed squarely at the forehead of its readership.

You can love it or hate it, but you can't deny its presence or its impact within the comics industry—and that, in and of itself, is enough reason to tip your hat and raise your glass in honor of *Wizard*'s anniversary.

Fabian: Let's start with the obvious question. How'd you first get started in the business?

Gareb: Well, right from the start, my mom would drive my little brother to the store to buy his sports cards. They also used to sell some comic books there, so occasionally we would pick up one or two hot comics and see what was going on.

About how long ago are we talking?

Around 1986. *Watchmen* and *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* came out around that time.

How did you define what it was you were looking for on the comic racks?

I wasn't really into comics yet. I was still into the sports cards. My brother really started collecting cards, and then my dad got into it. Before you knew it, we were in the business. We would go to trading card shows on the weekends to buy and sell. Then, about two years later, we had gotten so interested in the hobby and had such a collection that we opened up a store [in Nanuet, N.Y.] called The Wizard of Cards and Comics.
We took in comic books immediately. We started out slow and then hired somebody to run the comic book department for the store. His name was Pat McCallum, who is now the editor-in-chief of *Wizard*.
I remember my dad always telling Pat that we were going to do something big in the comic book marketplace. There was always a lot of potential with comic books.

But comics were still something you and most of your family were not familiar with?

Right. At this point, we were learning about it. I had become a fan of a few artists and writers out there. Naturally, because the store had every available product for consumption, I had access to just about everything. I had unlimited potential to read.
About a year after we opened up, the store space right next to us became available. So we decided to knock the wall down and take the place over. I had just graduated high school. I worked at the store during the summers, and went to college at the State University of New York at Albany in upstate New York.

Did you stay in touch with comics while you were away at school?

Yeah, my friends and I would get done after a long day of classes and come back and read a copy of *Uncanny X-Men* or *Amazing Spider-Man*. It was just something you did.

ALL THE OTHER GUIDES OUT THERE WERE NOT PUT OUT BY PEOPLE WHO WERE YOUNG AND ENERGETIC AND HAD ANY FUN IN THE BUSINESS.

So how did you get into publishing?

In college, I used to sell advertising for the school paper, and I learned how to use desktop publishing. I really liked the publishing field, and that's when I started thinking about starting a magazine on comic books and cards.
After I graduated in 1990, I started working in the store to get a feel for what I wanted to do. We had started to do really, really well with the comic books and the cards, but we really wanted to develop the comic book part into something more. Pat wanted to do a newsletter for the store very badly. So he wrote a lot of it. I edited a lot of it and did most of the desktop work. It was a lot of hard work.

What sort of things did you include in the store's newsletter?

We had coupons in there for special promotions. We were always promoting the newest book that we thought would do really well. We were giving this away to all the people that came into the store that were club members.
At the time, I think we had anywhere from 500 to 1,000 kids in our club. It was getting out of hand. Pat was doing a great job getting the kids excited. He was pushing me like crazy to do this. He knew I had the skills and he really wanted to make the business a lot stronger. So the two of us spent a lot of time putting this thing together.

When did you think you could expand the newsletter to a magazine on a national level?

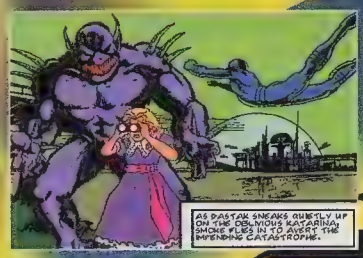
I started talking to a few people in the industry about it. They all thought I was really crazy, but at this point in time, we had become friendly with a lot of comic book artists, because my dad was always into original artwork. We were actually very, very friendly with Todd McFarlane.
Then, about three months after I graduated, I realized this was something I really wanted to do. I had the computer setup and Pat was really willing to make a commitment to it. We had a few other friends that could write for us too. We had this piece of artwork that McFarlane had done for my dad. So we called up Todd and asked, "Todd, can we use it for the cover?" And he said, "Sure, no problem." So as a token of our appreciation, we sent him a case or two of hockey cards, because he was a huge hockey fan.

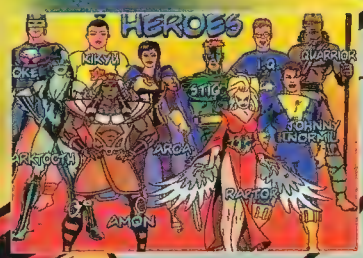
Which made him happy.

Anybody that wants to make Todd happy should just send him hockey cards.

But wanting to publish a magazine is very different from actually doing it and getting the money to do so.

INCLUDES NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR*





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Right from the start, we were obviously doing this on a shoestring budget. But it was all a matter of "How can we get this thing together?" All we really wanted to do in this industry is put out a really good price guide. All the other guides out there were not put out by people who were young and energetic and had any fun in the business. It began more from a sense of enthusiasm from wanting to do something as opposed to a sense of money to be made here. It was always about how we could make this industry bigger. The idea at the time was we need a good price guide and we need something to tell us what is going on. And let's try to sell it if we can.

How did you get your editorial stuff put together for your first issue?

I hired one or two people in the publishing business. We got Pat O'Neill [as a contributing editor] to help get some writers together. We had an art director kind of help put the stories together. We had a color separator in Manhattan. We had a printer in Pennsylvania. All the pieces started coming together.

So how did you feel when you finally saw that completed first issue?

It felt great, but there were things that we needed to do differently. It took a lot of time and energy to get it to that stage. And you always have a lot more time to spend on a first issue than the second. Four weeks later, the second one had to be out, so we didn't have time to appreciate the first one. We asked ourselves, "What could we do better?"

Did you get a lot of answers from your own internal staff or your reader base?

It happened from everywhere. I would go to the shows and talk to a whole bunch of retailers, and they would all tell me they didn't need another magazine. The more they told me I couldn't do it, the harder that drove me. But there were also a lot of retailers that said, "Why don't you try this?"
Instantly, we had a lot of fan mail from people who said it was great and they loved it, but why don't you try this? A lot of kids saw what we wanted to do right from the start, and they knew it was put out by a bunch of young people. We were going to do whatever we could to get the kids excited about our product. So I kept saying, "Tell your friends, tell your friends, tell your friends!" We had every kid in America telling their friends about the magazine, and probably around issue #7 was where we really started to hit bottom.

Why was that?

THE IMAGE CREATORS WERE THE HOTTEST PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS. WHEN TODD McFARLANE, JIM LEE AND ROB LIEFELD ALL CALLED AND SAID THEY WANTED TO DO A COVER, I WASN'T GOING TO SAY NO.

At this point in time, even though our sales may have been the same, all of our production costs were going up because we kept wanting to make the magazine bigger and better. We had gone to a better paper stock.

So we're now in, what, late '91 or so?

This was around issues #10-#12, with covers by Rob Liefeld, Todd McFarlane and Jim Lee. They were the best talent in the business, and we made a real conscious effort to support them.

One of the things the industry has said quite often about *Wizard* is that it is or has been "in bed" with certain publishers and people. What is your response to that?

When you are running a magazine, you have to be an unbiased resource in the marketplace. You have to be very, very true to your consumer. I remember that a lot of the companies were just not willing to work with us. They didn't understand what we were doing and how we were doing it. And at the time, the fans had been along with these Image artists. They were all starting to pick up some steam at the time.

It's a chicken-and-egg kind of thing.

It was. Image started when we started. We were there a little bit before that, but we were just starting to essentially become popular. So we were both growing together. They wanted to do a lot of stuff with us, and us with them. These were the hottest people in the business. When Todd McFarlane, Jim Lee and Rob Liefeld all called and said they wanted to do a cover, I wasn't going to say no.
It was a situation where the best people in the business wanted to do pieces for us. But the other companies just didn't catch on. They never got up to the plate and said, "Wow, look what they're doing. We should be doing the same thing." They never ever said that.

Is it coincidental that as a result of that, both your magazine and the companies you worked with—Image and Valiant—grew at the same time?

I don't think it was so much of a coincidence. The marketplace was ready for something for younger consumers and nobody was delivering. Everybody had lost touch with the marketplace at the time, except for Valiant and Image. They knew what the fans wanted and they were delivering. And we were delivering editorially.
We found companies that were willing to do everything together. They believed in each other as companies and decided to move forward and make the marketplace a better place and a more fun place to be in.

What constituted your ability to say what was hot or not in terms of things that might be slightly subjective, such as back issue sales, hot characters or creators? No one is going to argue what the number one selling comic is; that's something quantifiable. But how do you quantify the other aspects of it?

We were able to develop a really great relationship with the retailers and the fans. We would get so much mail from the fans about what was going on. They would tell us what they liked and what they didn't like. We read every single letter. When we were doing the price guide, we were talking to hundreds of retailers every single month. We had thousands of scouts out there in the marketplace working for us at the time. And we still do. Everybody who reads the magazine pretty much works for us.
We also have a staff that regularly speaks to and sends surveys to retailers. And from that material, we generate the "Top Ten" back issues, the price guide, the "Top Ten Hottest Writers and Artists," and the "Market Watch" information.

You are now in a position where your publication outsells pretty much any title that those companies put out on a regular basis. Why do you think that is?

We never went up as much as everybody else

YOUNGBLOOD #1™

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went up, because if people bought a lot of comic books, they still needed only one Wizard. And when people stopped buying a lot of comic books, they still only needed one *Wizard*, so we never took the highs and lows of the industry as much as anybody else did. A lot of the reason for it is that our goal is to deliver the best $4.55 value in the entire industry. We are constantly rethinking how to improve. We've always been able to take a step back and look at ourselves.

just not putting out products that consumers want to read.

If you take a look at any single high-quality product in the business, it will sell well if it is something the consumers want. Marvel doesn't know how to promote. I think they took a long time off from their fans. They forgot what the fans want to see. And I think that at this point in time they are starting to change that around.

We offer a lot more than just advertising pages to the people we work with. I want to them to do a lot of interactive things with our audience. They can do inserts. They can do cards. They can do comic books. They can do contests. We want to be more of a partner with the companies that we work with.

MOST OF THE COMPANIES IN THIS INDUSTRY HAVE COMPLETELY LOST FOCUS.

Do you think some of the publishers in the industry have lost sight of that?

I think every company out there got complacent when sales were really great and they all believed they could do no wrong. Every single company started coming out with a ton of titles, which all of a sudden stopped selling. A lot of them need to think about the quality of the product they put out. Also, a lot of companies just outright stopped promoting to the consumer. It all of a sudden became very, very expensive in the marketplace to promote to the consumer, and a lot of the companies don't want to do that. They remember the old days when it was just very, very easy to simply put out a product in the marketplace.

One thing that the magazine does—not to be a complete brown noser—is give a lot of value for its book. You don't raise your price whenever you include inserts or blow-ins. Do you think part of the loyalty of the readership could be due to the fact that they feel that other companies are not providing something you do?

Yes. We treat our fans with respect. We understand who our audience is. We like to think we are the people who read our magazine. I still go to all the shows and talk to the fans. But a lot of people that used to go to shows and talk to the fans are not there anymore.

I want your opinions on the industry. Who's doing things right, who's doing things wrong and what should they be doing?

Right off the bat, I think most of the companies in this industry have completely lost focus. They forgot who they are selling books to. The marketplace has changed, the consumers have changed, their tastes have changed, but their products haven't changed. So they are selling the right product to the wrong audience. Or the wrong product to the right audience. They are

The last topic in terms of the industry is your approach to its creative talent. Flipping open to the "Top Ten Hottest Artists and Writers" lists, what are your feelings on the magazine's ability to help create somebody who is hot, and, in a way, abandon them when they are no longer hot?

We get so much feedback that we know who is on the fans' minds. I believe that in order for talent to have any kind of staying power—especially in an industry where talent is constantly moving in and out—they have to establish a good base for themselves. If you look at anybody on that list, you ask what have they done on a consistent basis to develop a certain attachment or loyalty to their fans? Those on the list know to develop this attachment or loyalty. And very few names come up with that. Very few creators work on a project for an extended period of time. Very few are capable of doing that.

There will always be people that will have the hit movie or the hit song or the hit book, whatever, that will come onto the "hot" list, and they will only be as good as their last movie or their last book; if it's not good, you know they will be off the list.

What do you see coming up next for *Wizard*?

We are now available on America Online. We have the opportunity to spread into a lot of other media. Right now, *Wizard* is at the point where there are a lot of different directions that I would like to take it. I would like to take *Wizard* into another format, be it either television or foreign languages. There are other types of media to present the product. We are going to do that so we can reach a much wider audience.

On a fun note, I just noticed that right above my head we have the Spider-Man "Casting Call" [from *Wizard* #42] signed by Cindy Crawford. You guys are getting a lot of fun out of the "Casting Calls." Does that help you in your ability to expand your company, even in a goofy way such as Hollywood stars?

Absolutely. We get a lot of calls from actors that want to play a certain role, or producers that want us to cast a certain movie that they want to do. I know that Cindy was very excited to see her picture in this magazine. She wrote, by the way, "To Gareb, With Love, Cindy Crawford."

Oh, ah. [*Laughter*] Now that there are so many movies and television shows based on our genre, do you think there is an outlet for you there?

I have a great relationship with a lot of people in Hollywood. We have really positioned ourselves as a resource for a lot of these people. I have a lot of fun doing that.

Let me ask you a question I'm often asked by my loved ones. When are you going to be happy? When are you finally going to be satisfied?

I'm happy now. I'm in a position where I do what I love. The magazine is doing great and I am happy with the product. But I don't want to look back at the body of work and say, "This is great. Time to rest on my laurels. Time to take advantage of what I've built." I constantly want to do things better and grow better. But that doesn't mean I'm not happy. I am a genuinely happy guy and I'm very happy with what we have done.

And the only thing that would make you happier is if Cindy Crawford would call!

Yes, that would make me even happier. [*Laughter*]

Fabian Nicieza is gearing up for writing Captain Marvel *and* The Last Spider-Man Story *for Marvel later this year. He longs for the day when Wizard will quit pickin' on him.*

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GARFIELD GAMES

by Lea Hernandez

a Dunn deal

The style is called "American manga"—American comics with a super-hot dash of Japanese comics and anime style. There are a number of artists in the U.S. currently practicing it, but none as successfully as Ben Dunn. Dunn founded Antarctic Press, the publisher of his books *Ninja High School*, the Bad Girl mega-hit *Warrior Nun Areala*, a host of other American manga and translated manga from Japan.

The fact that *Ninja High School* (which was published by the Malibu imprint Eternity for issues #5-#39), *Areala* and Antarctic Press exist can be credited to Dunn's trip to his native Taiwan when he was 13 years old. Dunn was a staunch Marvel Comics reader until he returned to Taiwan and discovered Go Nagai's *Mazinger Z*.

What was it about *Mazinger Z* that inspired a career and a company? For Dunn, it was the fact that it was totally unlike any comic he'd ever read. "It was extremely violent, it was in black and white, and it had entire pages with no dialogue on them," he recalls. In short, everything Marvel comics were not.

Another revelation for Dunn was that Nagai's backgrounds were realistic, but the characters were not. He realized that it was possible to tell a serious story without adhering to a naturalistic style. Not only had Nagai's work become the seed of Dunn's storytelling, but it also sparked a lifelong dream to publish translated manga.

Back in his college days, Dunn spent more time drawing than going to class. After five years, he left without his business degree, but with an opportunity to draw comics professionally.

After *Bloody Bones and Black-Eyed Peas* for the ill-fated Galaxy Comics, Dunn created *Tiger-X* (which ran in Dunn's *Mangazine*) in 1985 and *Ninja High School* in 1987. Until he created *Areala*, *NHS* was Dunn's best-known and most popular work.

"Any given issue was like a culmination of whatever was popular in anime and manga at the time, whether it was *Macross* [*Robotech* in the U.S.] or *Nadia* [a.k.a. *The Secret of Blue Water*]," Dunn says.

Another possible reason for the enduring popularity of *NHS* was that Dunn's infectious enthusiasm led to three other *NHS* titles that encouraged fans to be participants in *NHS: Girls of Ninja High School*, *Ninja High School Yearbook* and *Ninja High School Swimsuit Special*.

Dunn feels these titles (plus other creator-owned American manga that Antarctic publishes) nurture artists he calls "mavericks, creating new and really experimental works." He also feels that he's helping artists, who want to work in an American manga style, get a chance he didn't have. Even though Dunn admits that "you have to be crazy to draw in a non-marketable style," he thinks that the growing influence of anime and manga—as seen in the art in mainstream comic books—is making American manga a marketable style.

In a business where creator-owned titles older than five years can be counted on maybe two hands—and American manga titles come and go even more quickly—*NHS* and Dunn are something of a phenomena. *NHS*, which Dunn still draws, is now just months away from issue #50 and only slightly younger than the 10-year-old Antarctic Press. How has he been able to keep drawing and writing *NHS* for so long? "Inertia," Dunn laughs, then adds, "I just like doing it, and

You can bet your report card that they don't teach arithmetic in *Ninja High School*!

new releases

video:

Metal Fighters Miku

The first video title from Software Sculptors (the folks who brought you the *Ranma 1/2 Video Jukebox and Screen Saver*) tells the story of The Pretty Four, an armored wrestling team. VERY cute design!

Subbed. Vol. 1 (episodes 1-3), 90 min.; Vol. 2 (episodes 4-5), 60 min. Street date: 9/5/95; $24.95 each.

You're Under Arrest

Action comedy from AnimEigo about Tokyo Highway Patrol officers Natsumi and Miyuki. From the creator of *Oh My Goddess!*, Kosuke Fujishima.

Hybrid LD format (subbed episodes on one side, the same episodes dubbed on the other), two episodes ("And So They Met"/"Tokyo Typhoon Rally"), 50 min. Street date: 10/3/95; $39.95.

Video, single episodes, "And So They Met" or "Tokyo Typhoon Rally," 25 min. Street date: 10/3/95; subbed $19.95, dubbed $14.95.

manga:

3X3 Eyes

The long-awaited return of Yuzo Takada's *3x3 Eyes*! The horror hit has finally returned just in time to scare the snot out of you all over again.

Dark Horse Comics/Studio Proteus, 32 pages, b&w, five issues, $2.95. Street date: 10/95.

Mai the Psychic Girl

The girl America fell in love with 10 years ago is back! Ryoichi Ikegami's *Mai the Psychic Girl* Perfect Collection Volume 1 (of 3 or 4). A thriller about a teenage girl coming to grips with awesome power. Viz Comics, 304 pages, b&w, $19.95. Street date: 10/17/95.

it was the only way to make a living."

Dunn readily admits that Antarctic has made a few mistakes. The first was when it reprinted some translated pages from Hayao Miyazaki's *Porco Rosso* (*Crimson Pig*) in Antarctic's *Mangazine*. (AP used too much art and overstepped the bounds of "fair use.") About the same time, Antarctic discovered that its translation of the *Star Trek* parody/homage manga entitled *Star Trekker* was too close for Paramount's comfort. Then the books *Settei* and *Doujinshi* reprinted art that was never meant to be seen outside of Japan.

To correct theses errors, apologies and compensations were made and then Antarctic and Dunn went on a sort of goodwill trip to Japan. There, they attended the mammoth Comiket (Comic Market, an amateur magazine convention with 300,000 attendees), and found their second manga title, Ganbear's funny-animal epic *Fantastic Panic*. Other titles soon followed, including the entire works of Japanese fan darling/costumer/singer/pin-up girl Ippongi Bang.

While *NHS* has been extraordinarily long-lived by American comics standards with modest success, Dunn didn't have a true hit until *Warrior Nun Areala* was published this year. Dunn felt there was room in the comics market for another Bad Girl book, "but you could call [Areala] the first Bad GOOD Girl," he jokes. *Areala* has all of the Dunn traits: the manga influence, the American comics influence and plenty of girls, but this time something new was added—the Catholic church.

Areala is a fight-

Areala, Warrior Nun

conventions

ANIME EAST '95, November 10-12, 1995. Brunswick Hilton and Towers, East Brunswick, NJ.

Guests: Hiroyuki Kitazume (character designer for *Gaiarth*, *Gundam ZZ* and *Moldiver*); MIO (singer of anime theme songs); *Akira* translator and *Nestrobber* creator Jo Duffy; and *Manga! Manga!* author Fred Schodt. Second Annual Tezuka Awards.

3-day membership (until 9/15) $35, (until 10/15) $40. Single-day membership (any of the three days) $25.

Voice: (908) 719-9770 (press * to leave your name and address for the mailing list); Fax: (908) 382-1275; e-mail: ANIME.EAST@GEnie.geis.com.

ROBOCON 10, The Official Robotech 10th Anniversary Event, October 6-8, 1995, Grand Hotel, Anaheim, CA.

Guests include *Robotech* producer Carl Macek (plus other production crew) and voice actors Tony Oliver (Rick Hunter), Reba West (Lynn Minmei), Cam Clarke (Max Sterling/Lancer) and others.

Membership $35; $40 at the door.

Info: ROBOCON 10, P.O. Box 3206, Anaheim, CA 92803.

cool stuff

Net-capable fans can now visit Manga Entertainment's Web site. Their Web address is http://www.polygram.com/manga. The site now has five new pages, downloadable video and online ordering for its fan club and merchandise. The site is updated the first of every month.

ing nun in a "What if the Catholic Church had a literal [rather than just spiritual] army?" milieu. The difference between *Areala* and other Army-of-God stories is that *Areala* didn't grow out of any sense of hostility (or even a sense of irony) about Catholicism (or any other religion). Rather, Dunn has positive memories of Catholic school, and has always been fascinated with the imagery and structure of the church. The difference between Areala herself and many other Bad Girls is that she doesn't hate men. Instead, she harbors a never-to-be-resolved longing for one (she *is* a nun, after all), and she's not a lone psycho, but a dedicated part of a team. Dunn's long-term goal for *Areala* is to cultivate the series' buyers, then carefully begin related titles. (The first, *Shotgun Mary*, begins this September.)

Since Dunn earns a staffer's salary as part of Antarctic Press, the money from *Areala*'s gangbuster sales went back into Antarctic's pockets, instead of his own. This has put Dunn's company in the enviable position of being able to continue his self-described obsession with manga and American manga as well as pursue projects that were previously financially out of reach, like importing Japanese CD-ROMs and production of made-for-video animation.

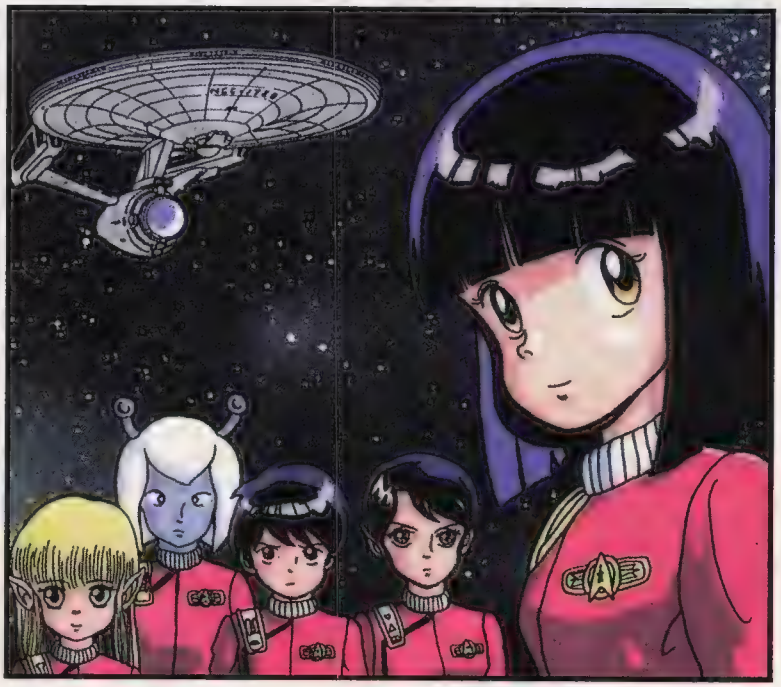
Sounding both pleased and slightly uncomfortable with the success that's given Antarctic some monetary muscle, Dunn says, "Money really *does* make a difference. We're in a position we weren't in before." He chuckles and adds, "It sounds crass, but it's true!"

Until next time.

Thanks to all the *Wizard* Manga Scene readers who e-mailed me their thoughts. Keep the e-mail coming to akiyama@cris.com. W

Lea Hernandez letters and retouches manga, co-moderates the anime and manga forum for the online service GEnie, and writes and draws comics.

"It is highly illogical that Paramount will agree to this, Captain." Art from *Star Trekker*.



picks of the month

video:
Record of Lodoss War, Vol. 1-4
(US Manga Corps, subtitled, 55 min. Street date: 9/5/95; $29.95.)

Even if you've seen some anime, *Lodoss War* is likely to be a new experience for you, since it has the conventions of Western fantasy and role-playing games (elves, knights, enchanters, clerics) filtered through the unique Japanese sensibility.

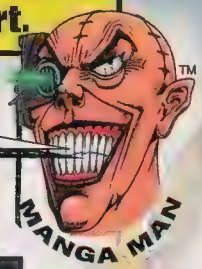
Lodoss War is an epic animated series with great character design and memorable music. If you want high fantasy Japanese-style, not to mention really cute (and nasty) elves, this is for you.

manga:
Vampire Miyu
(Antarctic Press, 32 pages, b&w, six issues, $2.95. Street date: 10/10/95.)

Still more scary stuff! Vampire Miyu is a young girl who must hunt the Shinma—demons that awaken when chaotic human spirits call to them—when she realizes that she's a vampire.

Miyu is Antarctic Press' entry in the shojo (girl's) manga field. Its art (by Narumi Kakinouchi) is typical of girl's comics—stylized yet sharp, romantic and, of course, a beautiful heroine.

Bizarre, violent, twisted and uniquely imaginative, MANGA VIDEO smashes the boundaries of Western animation and breathes a graphic life-force into the world of Japanese Comic Art.



A Triple Feature ANIME Feast From MANGA Video!

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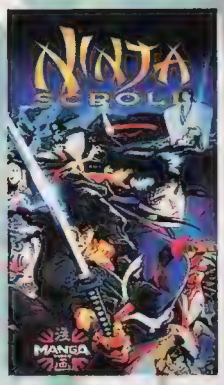
Parental Discretion Advised!



Ninja Scroll An all-action demonic adventure set in Japan, a place of exquisite beauty and arbitrary brutality. Produced by the acclaimed MADHOUSE animation studio, Ninja Scroll features a wicked cast of characters, extraordinary fight scenes and a super-intense story line. This violent and ultimately deadly animated thriller is sure to please MANGA fans everywhere.

$19.95 English / $24.95 Subtitled

The Wings Of Honneamise Combining stunning animation and a striking original soundtrack by Ryuichi Sakamoto, "The Wings Of Honneamise" is a unique and thought-provoking film that creates an imaginary world in fascinating detail. An $8 million production using the talents of over 3,000 animators, this beautiful film challenges preconceived notions about animation and far surpasses its expectations.

$19.95 English / $24.95 Subtitled

PATLABOR 1 An astonishing doomsday vision of an automated society – in the hands of a madman. Based on the acclaimed video and television series, PATLABOR 1 The Movie is a science-fiction police drama set against a tale of danger and high-tech revenge. Watch for the brand new RMFDM video "Juke Joint Jezebel" featuring animation from PATLABOR I!

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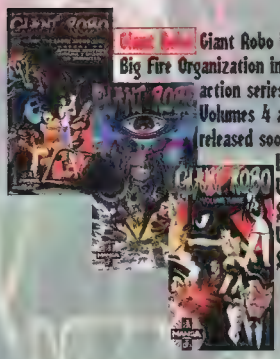
Angel Cop A 6 part explosive tour through the streets of Tokyo as the violence mounts and time runs out. High-octane anime! In English $9.95 Each



Giant Robo Giant Robo battles the Big Fire Organization in this red-hot action series. Watch for Volumes 4 and 5 to be released soon!

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Volumes 2, 3
$14.95 Each

Macross Plus The highly acclaimed, action packed and visually superb brand-new series from legendary director Shoji Kawamori!

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Orguss 02 Super Dimension Century Orguss 02 Mecha Action is available in three volumes, each containing two sensational episodes.

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a look at some good stuff done by some small publishers

Meet the Press

Small Press Expo lets fans get up close and personal with creators; Palmer's Picks Special Report: The Second Annual Small Press Expo

This ain't no San Diego. That's one thing for sure about the Small Press Expo, which was held in Bethesda, Md., in June. The second annual expo was a contrast to the usual large-scale comic book conventions.

No hype and glitz. No 20-foot character displays. No light shows or banks of TV screens. No fog machines. No retailers dealing comics in an adjoining room.

Just small press publishers interacting with their fans.

There was the king of the small press, Dave Sim, with his trusty partner-in-crime/background artist Gerhard, taking time out of their 1995 World Tour to discuss *Cerebus* #200, due out later this year. *Milk & Cheese* creator Evan Dorkin held court in one of the more entertaining booths, cracking jokes and telling stories to fans. Marc Hempel talked up his newest project *TUG and buster*. Martin Wagner gave away free prints featuring a crossover of sorts between his Hepcats and Sim's aardvark, and announced the premiere of his newest *Hepcats* storyline: *Snowblind*. Mark Wheatley proudly stood behind a color display of his relaunched book, *Radical Dreamer*.

Also getting up close and personal with their loyal legion of fans were David Mazzucchelli (*Rubber Blanket*), Sarah Dyer (*Action Girl Comics*) and David Lapham (*Stray Bullets*), among others.

The strength of the small press is its closeness with its fans. And that bond—which the Small Press Expo only serves to reinforce—ensures its continued success.

"The small press is the strongest and best growing part of the comic book industry," states Jon Cohen, organizer of the Small Press Expo. "People are picking them up and getting more out of them because the creators are putting more into them. I'm not saying it's not going on in other places, but the small press is where it's really happening, and fans and stores are starting to see it."

Survival Instincts

What fans and stores are also starting to see is a change in the marketplace. With direct distribution deals being signed by major comic publishers (Marvel/Heroes World; DC, Dark Horse, Image/Diamond Comics Distributors), small press publishers are struggling to find their niche.

Many publishers fear that fans will have to make an extra effort to find already obscure titles, or that the small press could even get rubbed completely out of the mainstream mix.

The changing face of comic book distribution has become more of a challenge for Greg Hyland, whose *Lethargic Comics* was recently dropped by Diamond. Capital City Distributors is the only large distributor carrying his comic, so retailers will have to make an extra effort to order it. "Stores are lazy and they don't want to go to several distributors for their books. They're so used to the fact that in the past they only had to order their comics through one distributor, and now they have to use two, or maybe even three distributors."

However, not all small press creators believe that the change in distribution is harmful.

Cover art from *Stray Bullets* #2

by tom palmer, jr.

"There's nothing but optimism and excitement on our end of the business and a lot of desperation on the other end," says Sim. "We've been eyeball to eyeball up until this point and the other guys just blinked. So now it's time to push forward the only way we can—with our creativity—and just prove that we can do what we've been saying all along that we can do."

Of course, Sim is in a more enviable position than many publishers, as he's approaching issue #200 of *Cerebus* (see sidebar below).

Reaching an Audience

As the way comic publishers do business changes, the survival of the small press will be based on its ability to adapt. A major way that small press publishers remain viable is through the ability to deliver original and offbeat books—focusing on plots and characters that mainstream publishers wouldn't touch. Titles that feature the hard-edged realism of *Stray Bullets* and the *Known Associates Mystery Series*, to the off-the-wall humor of *Milk & Cheese* and *TUG & buster*, to the imaginative fantasy and science-fiction of *Radical Dreamer* and *Strange Attractors* have carved a niche with readers. You'd be hard pressed to find this level of experimentation among mainstream companies.

While alternative comics are considered experimental and cutting-edge, most creators realize that their books must also remain accessible to new readers.

Sarah Dyer, editor and creator of *Action Girl Comics*, designed her comic to appeal to a large audience. Dyer's anthology, which features work from a new breed of female cartoonists, is aimed towards all ages (and both sexes). "I wanted a book that reflected my generation and sensibilities, and I also wanted something that was accessible. I think anything that is accessible is going to do well because you're not limiting your audience."

Stray Bullets creator David Lapham is hoping to attract new readers by keeping his book simplistic and emphasizing clear storytelling over distracting visuals. "There are no weird panels, so you don't have to be schooled in the comic book language to understand it," he explains. "You can get the story."

Joe Zabel, who has recently launched his *Known Associates Mystery Series*, agrees with Lapham's approach. "In a lot of cases it's very interesting to find a comic with a cliffhanger ending, but it's just become a bit much. The whole concept of a story with a beginning, middle and end has just dissolved." Zabel's series puts another twist on accessibility by focusing on Raymond Fish and Delphinia Morgan, two amateur detectives that star in a series of self-contained modern mystery stories.

Expanding the Market

Small press publishers are also following the lead of larger publishers, expanding into more mainstream venues—including non-comic related

Sim City 200

"I probably know Cerebus better than I know anybody else in my life," says self-publishing guru Dave Sim as he approaches the 200th issue of *Cerebus*. "As I'm sure many married couples have found out, that kind of familiarity doesn't necessarily help matters. Just because you know the other person doesn't mean you can make anything of them other than what they are."

Not many people could have predicted that writer/artist Sim would become so familiar with Cerebus when he launched the comic in late 1977. When *Cerebus* hits #200 this November, Sim (along with background artist Gerhard) will still have a third of the way left in the ambitious 300-issue series that chronicles the life (including all the ups and downs) of a short, ill-tempered, anthropomorphic aardvark.

Cerebus embodies qualities that Sim sees in many people. "The willful urge towards self-destruction. The relentless urge to place blame for your life on everyone else. I think everyone goes through that at one time or another in their life and they either learn to put the blame where it belongs, with themselves, or they just become tedious people to talk to after a while."

Leading into the next storyline called "Guys," the current *Cerebus* storyline, "Minds," serves as both the conclusion of the 50-issue "Mothers & Daughters" opus, and as a journey of self-discovery for Cerebus. "I'm not sure if it's going to represent a change in his character. We'll have to wait for the last 100 issues to find that out. As Cerebus' creator, I'm certainly giving it the old college try to find some sort of spark of life underneath that gray, obnoxious exterior, and see if he can't become a better character for it."

magazines, music stores, video games, toys, film and television.

David Mazzucchelli, who is preparing a new issue of his acclaimed *Rubber Blanket*, has had his work featured in many mainstream magazines, including the cover of *The New Yorker*. Mazzucchelli uses this outside work to free his *Rubber Blanket* anthology from economic concerns, but he realizes that comics must find a way into other areas. "It's an ongoing problem to get these comics out in front of people who are going to be interested. The way to find fans who are not interested in mainstream comics is not necessarily in a comics store; it's in other kinds of areas, like record stores."

Mazzucchelli sees the possibility of an overlap specifically between alternative music and alternative comics. "I think there's a similarity in sensibility. I don't have demographic figures in front of me, but the age of the audiences is probably very similar."

Many small press artists are overwhelmed with offers from outside interests. One such creator is *Radical Dreamer*'s Mark Wheatley. "Four different video game companies are talking to me about video games. MTV is talking about doing a project. I've had galleries approach me about framed prints. Toy companies have talked to me. The reception I've received from outside the field has been tremendous compared to what happened inside." His comic has even appeared in the background on *Roseanne* (along with Dorkin's *Milk & Cheese*) and was a plot point on an episode of *Grace Under Fire*.

Evan Dorkin, creator of the notorious *Milk & Cheese*, is finding more opportunities for work outside of the industry because of the popularity of his comic books. He is scripting episodes of the *Space Ghost Coast to Coast* talk show (along with Sarah Dyer), and is flooded with offers for *Milk & Cheese* spin-offs. However, he is hesitant to approve any adaptations. "I didn't mean to have my comics be a stepping stone to other work, but it's working out that way," he explains. "It's kind of flattering, but also kind of a joke. Everybody has such a ridiculous idea of how to do these characters for film or television. They see this strip that runs for two pages at a pop and they want to make a half-hour show out of it with alcoholic dairy products that blaspheme, beat people over the head, watch television, and spout junk culture and threats."

Dorkin's new work provides him with an opportunity to reach more people. "I'd like to see how my material goes over to the general public. Not that the general public is any smarter than the comics public, but the comic book field is just a niche."

Some creators seeking ways to expand their audience and increase profitability are turning to different forms of publishing.

Martin Wagner, creator of *Hepcats*, used the expo as the premiere for *Hepcats: Snowblind Part One*, a compilation of his eight-issue *Hepcats* storyline. Wagner is considering dropping his comic series in favor of lengthy graphic novels. "It just seems to me to be something that is easier to afford and it works better in terms of my own personality. The fans will be happier with me because I won't have to break any schedule promises. I can just apply myself with getting these books out."

Fans at the expo were surprised to see the graphic novel, and Wagner hopes this excitement will translate into more opportunities for his work. Wagner has one opportunity that not many small press artists have: the possibility of bookstore distribution. "I have Barnes & Noble interested in the book now and I've designed *Snowblind* with book distribution in mind."

While the creators at the Small Press Expo may have very different approaches and philosophies on how to do better business, they were extremely optimistic that the readership for their work will continue to expand. The spirit at the expo can perhaps best be summed up by an observation made by Marc Hempel.

"What the comic industry really needs is this big influx of new energy. Whatever the next big thing is, you can bet on the fact that it's not going to come from big publishers like Marvel or Image or DC. It's going to come from somebody who has a different thought or idea or concept, and it's going to come from the self-publishers and the independents."

Tom Palmer Jr. has decided to self-publish his own comic series about the trials and tribulations of a rock.

Giving a Tug

Writer/artist Marc Hempel, perhaps best known for drawing "The Kindly Ones" story arc in Vertigo's *Sandman*, is taking the plunge into self-publishing with *TUG & buster*. He used the Small Press Expo to offer a sneak preview of the book which will debut this fall.

"The comic is about Tug, who's a big guy, and Buster, who's a little guy. Buster worships Tug and devotes his entire life to being like Tug even though Tug is a big moron who doesn't say or do anything. It's a parody of heroes and the people that worship them. It makes fun of the American male ideal and it's filled with a bunch of lovable, pathetic loser characters that I really enjoy expressing."

Hempel, like many of his small press compatriots, wants to attract new readers, and he believes *TUG* will go over well with a wide audience. "It's accessible to a larger segment of the public. It should appeal to women because it makes fun of men and it should appeal to men because it makes fun of men. I think everybody should get something out of it."

YOUNGBLOOD #2

• ROB LIEFELD • ERIC STEPHENSON
• ROGER CRUZ • DANNY [illegible]

BERZERKERS #3

•BRAWLIN' BEAU SMITH
•DERANGED DAN FRAGA

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#19™

DESTROYER STARTS HERE!

•ERIC STEPHENSON
•TODD NAUCK

BLOODPOOL #3

• JO (GLORY) DUFFY
• PATRICK LEE

EXTREME STUDIOS

image COMICS

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Wizard & DC Comics Present:

FIND PHIL IN UNDERWORLD UNLEASHED CONTEST

Every dog has its day, and it's time to howl if you're one of the dirtiest dogs out there: the DC villains. They've got their own three-issue mini-series going these days, entitled *Underworld Unleashed*. These evil maniacs are so happy about it that they're boldly running around, creating chaos everywhere they go—and we mean *everywhere*. Heck, one DC villain has even kidnapped our own trusty library assistant, Phil Colligan. And we're going to need your help to get him back.

Who took poor Phil?...

...one of these guys?

...the Joker?

This contest is sponsored by the DC Comics people,
a bunch of good guys who really know their bad guys.

What You Gotta Do:

Young Phil's been kidnapped by one of the many dastardly DC villains who appears in *Underworld Unleashed*. We've called the cops and even put Phil's mug shot on milk cartons in an effort to help get him back, but until we know just *who* kidnapped him, we can't get too far. That's where you come in.

You've got to tell us which DC villain grabbed Phil. How are you gonna do that? Well, it sure would help if you'd read *Underworld Unleashed* and keep your eyes open for the guy. He looks like that kid on the milk carton to the left, and he'll be real easy to spot, since he'll be the only character in the whole limited series wearing a *Wizard* T-shirt. One of the DC villains will be shown holding Phil; you tell us which one it is and you could win a nifty prize. Then we'll all go find the nasty bad guy in question and give him a stern talking-to.

THE CARDS

THE ART

Grand Prize (1): One lucky reader who correctly tells us who nabbed Phil will receive piece of original *Underworld Unleashed* art by Howard Porter and Dan Green, plus a spiffy box of the SkyBox DC Villains Series 2 trading cards!

First Prize (20): Another 20 readers who get it right will each receive a set of the three-issue *Underworld Unleashed* limited series, with the first issue autographed by the creative team of Mark Waid, Howard Porter and Dan Green. Oh, yeah—you get a box of SkyBox DC Villains Series 2 trading cards, too.

LEGAL TEXT UNLEASHED

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics, their immediate families and Phil's dog. He could probably sniff him out. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form, a standard postcard or a 3-by-5-inch index card and tell us which bad guy kidnapped Phil. Mail each entry separately to: Underworld Unleashed Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. The evil that men do often lives on after them, while the good is interred with the bones. So let it be with Phil. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 15, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected by random drawing among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on November 29, 1995.

For a list of winners, available after November 29, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Underworld Unleashed Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Fill this sucker out, put it an envelope, and send it to: Underworld Unleashed Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Official Underworld Unleashed Entry Form

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Which DC Villain kidnapped Phil? _____

Deadline is November 15, 1995!

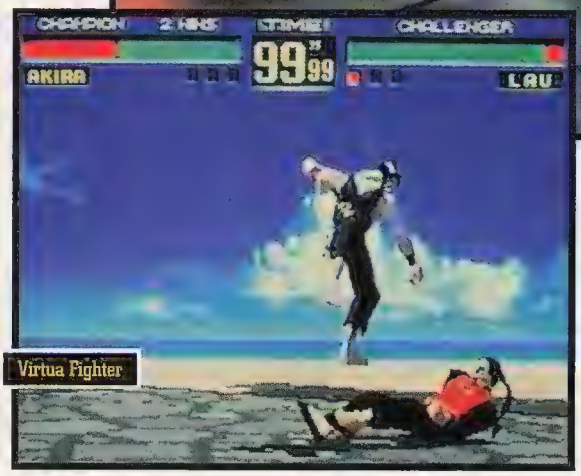
POWER UP!

By Steve Brown

SITTING DOWN WITH SEGA SATURN

Four hundred bucks. Sixteen hundred quarters. Eight thousand nickels. There's no sense in trying to rationalize paying $400 for a video game system; odds are most of you won't be selling off your Black Lotuses to pick up the shiny new Sega Saturn CD-ROM. I did (and got to keep my Moxes). The potential market for the Saturn is huge, but as long as the basic system stays above the magical $249.99 price point, the Saturn will remain a niche purchase. I'll bet when Nintendo's Ultra 64 is released next year, Sega will drop the Saturn's retail price to match whatever Nintendo debuts at (rumored to be $200-$250). Until then, I don't see a lot of price fluctuation. Essentially, the Saturn is a slightly faster 3DO, but with Sega's backing and enormous in-house game development staff, the software will overcome the financially beleaguered 3DO. I love the 3DO system and, with the exception of *Panzer Dragoon*, none of the Saturn's first generation games steal any thunder. But the Saturn was rushed out four months early, and its first generation games are a vast improvement over the 3DO's rookie crop. The future looks great for Saturn.

Wizard's advice...if you've got the dough, go for it, it delivers...but if your cash flow is low, don't sweat it, the Saturn won't run rings around your 16-bit machines.



Virtua Fighter

VIRTUA FIGHTER (by Sega for Saturn)

The pack-in game can make or break a system, that's why companies continually change them. Saturn's sole freebie is an almost exact translation of the ever-popular arcade hit *Virtua Fighter*. The differences are minor—less polygonal detailing and a bit slower—but for a home translation of a $3,500 arcade machine, it shines. I do have a gripe though: the Saturn only includes one controller. That's fine, but why pack it with such an obvious two-player game? If you've read any of my previous rantings you know I dislike the entire fighting game genre, but this game has added quite a bit to that tired category. Probably the greatest pack-in game ever.

CLOCKWORK KNIGHT (by Sega for Saturn)

What would a system be without a platform side-to-side shooter? *Clockwork Knight* is graphically stunning, easy to play and difficult to master. I get the feeling this is a reprogrammed 16-bit title; it's like an Image comic, 'cause even with all the pretty pictures it's still just a simple side scroller. As a first generation game it is your only choice,

and if this type of a game appeals to you, buy it. *Wizard* says, forget it if you're over the age of 14.

DAYTONA USA

(by Sega for Saturn)

I was disappointed by this game. Having never played it in the arcade, I expected a lot more. Keeping in mind this is a next generation machine, I hold Saturn games to a higher level of scrutiny. Again, a fantastic looking game with graphics to die for, but as a genre, racing games are limited to the track, car model and, of course, death-dealing crashes. The track you race on is fairly straightforward and wonderfully rendered. Unfortunately, the polygons can't keep up with the speed of the car. A small quibble, but not being able to see where you're going because the game can't "write" the scenery fast enough is a bummer. You have only one car to choose from, and there are no life-extinguishing crashes. In fact, all slamming into a wall at 180 mph does, is slow you down. On the plus side, it feels like speed, looks like speed and really sounds like speed. *Wizard* says...a near miss that only diehard racing buffs need; wait for *Ridge Racer* next year.

WORLDWIDE SOCCER

(by Sega for Saturn)

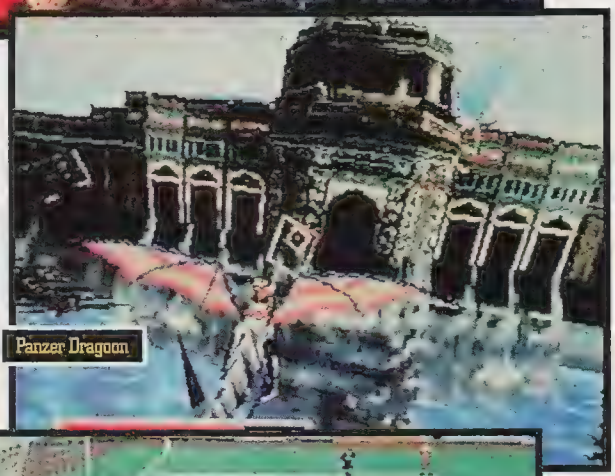
First off, this is a slightly less glamorous knockoff of 3DO's *FIFA Soccer*. As a Saturn soccer game, it rocks—a complete success and very fun to play. I enjoy sports games, nothing beats the one-on-one competitive spirit between friends. *WW Soccer* is tough to score, true to a typical soccer match. Nothing distinguishes it from the barely superior *FIFA*, but being compared favorably to the greatest soccer game of all time is as high a compliment as I can give.

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS

(by Sega for Saturn)

Way, way, way too slow. The shooting mechanics are a tad too difficult. The graphics of your player are nice eye candy, but the *Pebble Beach* engine takes much too much time to propel the game along. Wait for another, they will make more.

Clockwork Knight—"it's like an Image comic."



Panzer Dragoon

Worldwide Soccer

Pebble Beach Golf Links

PANZER DRAGOON

(by Sega for Saturn)

Isn't it just like *Wizard* to save the best for last? *Panzer Dragoon* is an absolute must-have, gotta play to believe, cutting-edge game. After an *Akira*-like seven-minute movie setting up the game, *Panzer* transports you to a warlike world. Armed with only a laser, you pilot a winged dragon and blow stuff up while trying to avoid the nasties of its 3-D terrain. This game is for the advanced gamer—the bosses are immense and the game has decent depth. We have seen the future, and if Sega can continue to push the envelope like this, home gaming will never be the same.

Overall, judging what the Sega Saturn has to offer now seems unfair—the current software is a mixed bag and as first generation games go, decent. What the Saturn does offer is potential, and it has the capability to revolutionize your gaming experience. Watch these pages for the latest word in our and Sega's quest for the next generation of video gaming. **W**

Steve Brown has enough trouble riding a horse, let alone a dragon. He just can't ever seem to tell which end is which.

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IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT...
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...when Storm met the Thing on the third in the series of three *Wizard*-exclusive Fleer OverPower Metal Prints.

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Each Metal Print is a whopper—a big 6 1/2"-by-10" worth of stylish Marvel OverPower art done up in Fleer's Marvel Metal process. And yes, you read that first sentence right—this baby is a *Wizard* exclusive, not available anywhere else. Don't miss out! Order today and get yours before time runs out!

And please, don't ever play golf when there's an electrical storm. It could be a very shocking experience.

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SCORE	RANK
0-5	Haggis ("How revolting!")
6-12	Circus Peanuts. Y'know, them weird orange peanut-shaped candies?
13-19	Unsold copies of Marvel's "Maximum Clonage" crossover. Nobody, especially retailers, enjoys eating that stuff
20	France. (No substance there.)

HEY!

SCREW JEOPARDY! WHAT WE'VE GOT HERE ARE SOME *REAL* TRIVIA QUESTIONS. WHAT FOLLOWS ARE 20 OF THE HARDEST QUESTIONS EVER SLAPPED TOGETHER BY A BAND OF HEAD-BANGING FANBOYS. LOOK ON PAGE (TK) FOR THE ANSWERS.

1. The old X-Men villain The Living Monolith was originally called:
A) Factor Three
B) Pharaoh
C) El Tigre
D) Grotesk

2. Who's the fuzzy green mascot from *Gen*[13]?
A) Jenteen
B) Orko
C) Qeelocke
D) Lockheed

3. How many different people have been active as the Green Goblin?
A) Four
B) Three
C) Two
D) One—your momma

4. Who is the Commissioner of Gotham City?
A) James Gordon
B) Harvey Bullock
C) Sarah Essen
D) Master Blaster (who also runs Bartertown)

5. Who kidnapped and dismantled the Vision?
A. Ultron
B. AIM
C. The Feds
D. Zack, the hyperactive Lego maniac

6. The original Green Lantern's ring was useless against:
A. Anything yellow.
B. Wood.
C. Tin.
D. Any villain who had a halfway decent costume, which meant he couldn't do squat to any of them Golden Age super-types.

7. What did Spawn use to stitch up his face?
A) Strips from his costume
B) Barbed wire
C) Shoelaces
D) Paper strips torn from the Spawn/Batman crossover. I mean, it's not like you can read that thing or anything

8. Banshee temporarily lost his sonic scream in battle with what evil foe?
A) Moses Magnum
B) Black Tom Cassidy
C) The Imperial Guard
D) His zipper, when he caught himself in it

9. What does the "13" in Gen[13] mean?
A) They're the 13th generation born after the bombing of Hiroshima
B) They each have 13 mutated genes
C) 13 U.S. Army generals tell the team what to do
D) Marvel won the lawsuit

10. Dazzler's graphic novel ended with her singing a song originally recorded by:
A) Billy Joel.
B) Elton John.
C) Dee Snider
D) Mary Chapin Carpenter.

11. What name hasn't Kitty Pryde gone by?
A) Airwalker
B) Shadowcat
C) Ariel
D) Sprite

12. Doug Ramsey, a.k.a. Cypher, first appeared in the pages of what comic?
A) *New Mutants*
B) *Uncanny X-Men*
C) *X-Factor*
D) *Cloak & Dagger*

13. Who's the leader of those stupid, stupid rat creatures in *Bone*?
A) King Dokker
B) Kingdok
C) Kinnoka
D) Marc Singer. Hey, in those *Beastmaster* flicks, he could control all sorts o' funky animals. (But he really shoulda put the moves on Tanya Roberts.)

14. What will Superman be convicted of in September?
A) The destruction of Krypton
B) Freeing the Aliens in *Superman/Aliens*
C) Crimes commited by Doomsday, for which Supes was framed
D) Cheap marketing gimmicks

15. Which of the following characters did not have a son who, at one time, was a supervillain?
A) J. Jonah Jameson
B) Lightning Lad
C) Wilson Fisk
D) Robbie Robertson

16. The two future X-Men who came back in time with Bishop were named:
A) Kyle & Reece
B) Cain & Abel
C) Malcolm & Randall
D) Expendable Shallow Character One & Expendable Shallow Character Two

17. In *The Dark Knight Returns*, which David Letterman guest gets a full kiss on the mouth from The Joker?
A) Dr. Ruth (y'know, that "zex und zex und zex und zex" lady)
B) Arnold Schwarzenegger
C) Teri Garr
D) Harvey Fierstein (who then wrestled the Joker to the ground and performed a rudeness most severe. Twice.)

18. The original Hobgoblin faked his own death by sending what two-bit hood dressed as the Hobgoblin to his grave?
A) Lefty Donovan
B) Nose Norton
C) Mikey "The Knife" Fasolo
D) Joey Rella

19. According to Guns 'N' Roses, what happened to Captain America in Paradise City?
A) Life's taken its toll, the Captain's fat and lazy, now all his money's drivin' him crazy
B) He's been torn apart, now he's a court jester with a broken heart
C) He's been ripped to shreds as the flag was burned, now everywhere Old Glory's spurned
D) Cap's come to the city to do a little bowlin', then he's gonna get rid of the undigested meat in his colon

20. The current popularity of the "Bad Girl" trend can be attested to:
A) The fact that most comic artists are male, and men enjoy bringing their hyperactive, oftentimes frustrated fantasies to "life."
B) Young male comic readers in the throes of puberty hypnotized by healthy women dressed in shoelaces.
C) The further deterioration and degeneration of our society of a whole, of which comics play only a small role.
D) All of the above

AFRAID?

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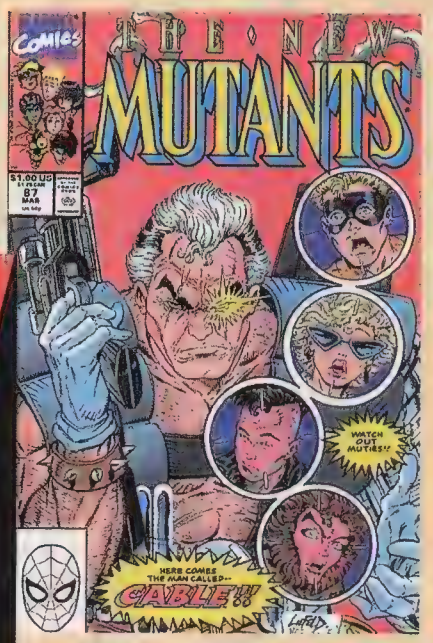
This month, we're kicking the regular Top Ten to that little box down there on page 133 so we can show you what the hottest comics have been since *Wizard* debuted over four years ago. Each book landed in the chart listing below depending on what Top Ten positions it held over the course of the last several years, and how long it held onto each spot.

Top 10 Comics

1. New Mutants #87
Lady Death #1 (orig. mini-series)
Gen[13] #1 (mini-series)



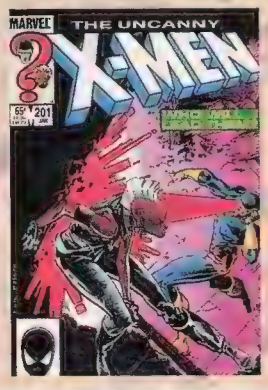
First place sees a three-way tie, with each of these books locking onto the coveted number one slot a record 15 months! *New Mutants* #87 housed the first appearance of Cable (back when fans gave a damn), *Lady Death* #1 was (and still is) one of the gems of the Bad Girls craze, and *Gen[13]* #1 houses the most popular Image team to date.

2. Shi #1

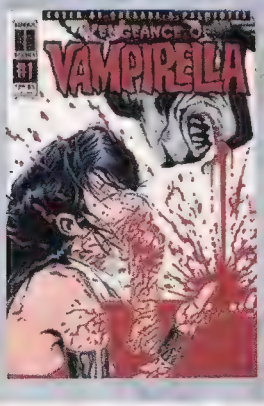
With a book that has clocked in the Top Ten for 13 months, Bill Tucci (or as we like to call him, The Tooch) has got a winner on his hands with *Shi*, a book that owes its popularity not only to the Bad Girls trend, but also to its excellent writing and superb art. Rising from obscurity, word of mouth circulated amongst fans as to how keen the book is, and presto, *Shi*, which chronicles the tales of assassin Ana Ishikawa, made some pretty big waves in the comics market.

3. GEN[13] #2 (MINI-SERIES) / UNCANNY X-MEN #201

A two-way third place tie connects two books that hung around the charts for a year each: the underprinted *Gen*[13] #2 continued the *Gen* phenomenon that's still going strong, and *Uncanny X-Men* #201 was a book that had the entire comic industry buzzing for over a year. As it finally turned out, Cable is really Nathan Summers, the son of Scott Summers and Madelyne Pryor, an' we first lay our eyes on baby Nate this ish, which appeared years before Cable debuted.



4. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1



With 11 months of Top Ten coverage tucked away in her cleavage, *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1, which re-introduced the '60s Warren heroine to a new generation of comic fans, helped light the match to that Bad Girls excitement we've told you about. This book had recently all but dropped out of Top Ten, until Vampi's recent "Mystery Walk" storyline—which revealed the character's true origins—brought her back into the spotlight.

5. UNCANNY X-MEN #248 / RAI #0

Holding their own for 10 months on the charts each, *Uncanny X-Men* #248 houses the first Jim Lee X-Men art (Jim Lee...on X-Men? Sheesh, that was a long time ago!). *Rai* #0, aside from coming out around the time when fans actually opened and read Valiant books, served as a prelude of sorts to the much-hyped *Deathmate* crossover between Valiant and Image.

6. UNCANNY X-MEN #266

The first appearance of the X-Men's Gambit kept this book strong in the charts for nine months. Fans were frothing at the mouth, thanks to rumors that Gambit was the X-traitor (Hey, Marvel—wanna, like, try wrapping up some plotlines before starting 20 new ones?), his budding relationship with Rogue and the fact that, aside from storyline involvement, Gambit is a pretty cool character.

7. MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #12 / SPAWN #4 / WOLVERINE #75

With eight months in the Top Ten each, *Magnus* #12 saw the first Valiant appearance of Turok (back when dinos were getting hot and Valiant back issues were the hottest thing going), *Spawn* #4 featured a coupon for that *Image* #0 mail-away fiasco and *Wolverine* #75 saw the most popular X-Man de-adamantiumized.

This month's Top Ten Comics

1. X-MEN: PRIME
2. LADY DEATH #1 (ORIG. MINI-SERIES)
3. X-FILES #1
4. SHI #1
5. GENERATION X #1
6. GEN[13] #1 (MINI-SERIES)
7. AZRAEL #1
8. X-FILES #2
9. X-MAN #1
10. VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #1

8. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #361 HARBINGER #1 SWORD OF AZRAEL #1

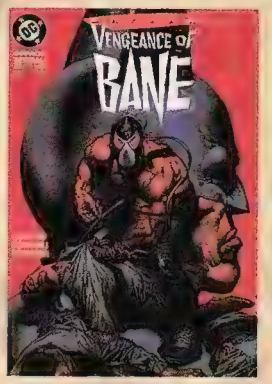
At seven months in the hot charts apiece, *Amazing Spider-Man* #361 sees the debut of the once-wildly popular (but now overexposed) Carnage, *Harbinger* #1 was just another hot, underprinted Valiant back issue and *Sword of Azrael* #1 gave the world the man who would be Batman.

9. DAREDEVIL #319 MOON KNIGHT #55

All right—two washed-up Marvel heroes! Briefly appearing on the charts for six months a pop, *Daredevil* #319 saw the "new and improved" (yeah, right) Daredevil costume, and *Moon Knight* #55 saw hot newcomer Stephen Platt make his artistic presence powerfully felt in the comics biz.

10. SHADOWMAN #8 RAI #4 BATMAN: VENGEANCE OF BANE #1 PRIME #2

Wrapping up this retro Top Ten, and clocking in at a five-month placement per book, *Shadowman* #8 introduced big-time baddie Master Darque, *Rai* #4 and *Prime* #2 were two massively underprinted issues, and *Vengeance of Bane* was the debut of the major Bat-back-breakin' foe Bane. And there you have it—the best Top 10s!



COMING SOON

Lady Death™

THE ODYSSEY #1

SCULPTURED EMBOSSED COVER

LADY DEATH IN 3D. JUST IMAGINE...

BRIAN PULIDO STEVEN HUGHES JASON JENSEN

CHAOS! COMICS™

ALL AGES

FULL COLOR

Lady Death, Chaos! Comics Trademark 1995 Brian Pulido.

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"In eons past, the four powers of Nature – earth, air, fire, and water – brought forth two races to care for their new world. One race, the Selumari, or coral elves, was made the guardian of air and water. The other, the Vagha, a dwarfish race, tended the earth and fire. Together, they worked to nurture the young world.

"Death, Nature's nemesis, created his own races to wrest control of the elemental powers. The Morehl, or lava elves, worshiped fire and destruction. The Trogs, a goblin race, sprang from earth and corruption. From the instant of their creation, fierce conflict enveloped the world. Hordes of Selumari, Vagha, Morehl, and Trogs swept across the land in endless battle, using their elemental magic to wreak havoc and summoning dragons to turn the tides of war."

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COMIC watch

Spawn #9

Writer: ***Neil Gaiman***
Artist: ***Todd McFarlane***
Publisher: ***Image Comics***
Release date: ***March 1993***

Y'know, it's kinda hard to believe that we haven't done this book in Comic Watch yet, but who cares? It's here now, so deal with it. Anywho, Angela, the redheaded, 100,000-year-old Spawn hunter first appeared in *Spawn* #9, courtesy of guest-writer Gaiman and perennial artist McFarlane. The job of our mysterious avenging angel from Elysium is to off our favorite Spawnie-guy. In this ish, she actually does in a certain Medieval Spawn (poor slob), and she even smiles while doing it. (Bitch.)

And on top o' alla this, Angela just starred in her own popular-as-peanuts-on-a-bar-top (don't ask) mini-series, and was immediately catapulted to new heights.

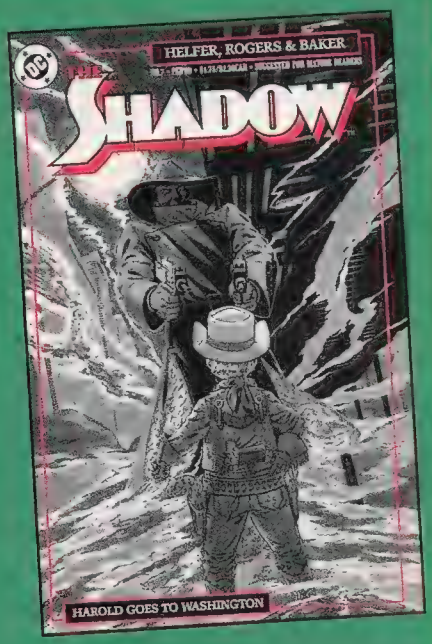
An' it all started in *Spawn* #9, a must-have for alla you *Spawn* collectors. This issue, the fiery redhead ruthlessly tries to kill Spawn, initiating a wild, Batman/Catwoman-like relationship between the two, as well as a solid fanship in readerland.

Y'know, just as an aside, fat-free food products really bite. If they have any taste to 'em at all, they taste just plain horrible. They suck. Makes you wanna just eat all the fat an' die from a friggin' heart attack right on the spot. Who wants to eat Fat-Free Pop Tarts? Give us the *real thing*, dammit!

Getting back to Angela...well, she's pretty hot. Er, in the back issue sense, that is. And the other way too. That's all you need to know there, Charlie. W

good & cheap

by Mike Searle



The Shadow #7 (2nd Series)

Writer: ***Andy Helfer***
Artists: ***Marshal Rogers & Kyle Baker***
Current Value: ***$2***

Before we go any further, let's get one thing straight—this is a *sick* book. From the eerily grim Marshal Rogers cover, through the particularly unnerving conclusion, *The Shadow* #7 is not your standard comic story.

Nor, for the most part, is it about its main character. But it's still darn good.

Meet little Harold: a grade schooler, pyromaniac, pet killer, assassin and murderer. Yep, one mixed-up kid. Oh, and he's on his way to meet the President of the United States for a class field trip.

Y'see, the kid comes from a screwed-up family. Unfortunately for Harold, his father died sometime earlier, and we begin to understand how the boy's warped mind works. His whole existence fixates around the fact that his father was a soldier, a beloved war hero who killed lots of people in World War II to earn his medals. So, slightly off-kiltered Harold, yearning to be a hero like his father, kills as well.

Playing out his fantasy world, things just get worse and worse. Throw in The Shadow as Harold takes a shot at the President, and you've got one bizarre and fascinating ride. W

PICKS

a listing of the hottest books as selected by the WIZARD staff, shipping in September

THE SCARLET SPIDER BOOKS

Writers: Various
Artists: Various
Release Dates: September 5, 12, 19, 26
Cover Prices: $1.95 each

MARVEL Spider-Man Editor-in-Chief Bob Budiansky knows that he's going to hear how this Scarlet Spider storyline parallels what happened earlier this year in the X-Men's "Age of Apocalypse" plot, with newly named titles for a new character. The only difference is that these stories take place in the real Spider-Man's timeline, making history once again.

The story spins off of August's *Spectacular Spider-Man* #229, in which Spider-Man decides to give it a rest. "Basically, we have a new character who's taking over for Spider-Man," Budiansky says. These titles aren't one-shots, he stresses. "They'll last as long as the Scarlet Spider lasts."

All five titles feature five-color covers and Marvel's Deluxe Format. They kick off with *Web of Scarlet Spider* #1 on September 5, followed weekly by *Amazing Scarlet Spider* #1, *Scarlet Spider* #1 and *Spectacular Scarlet Spider* #1. These issues present the four-part "Virtual Mortality" storyline, in which Doctor Octopus returns—and this time *she's* ticked off. Also shipping the third week will be *Scarlet Spider Unlimited* #1, a 64-page $3.95 issue in which the Scarlet Spider learns his true origin.

These new series will lead into November's "Rebirth," which heralds new creators Dan Jurgens and John Romita Jr. (For more, see "Wizard News" on page #).

Budiansky says his office has received an enormous reaction to the Clone story. "Some readers are really excited about it, some are surprised, some are shocked, some are even dismayed and a few are angry," he says. "But almost all of them are really interested, even the angriest fans. We're receiving 20 times the letters we were getting a few years ago. We think we have a lot of really terrific stuff lined up, with even more revelations, more shocks and more surprises, and we hope all the fans will be there to see it."

—Craig Shutt

CHAOS! QUARTERLY #1

Writers: Brian Pulido & various others
Artists: Various
Release Date: September 26
Cover Price: $4.95

CHAOS! COMICS "This won't really be an anthology," says Brian Pulido, publisher of Chaos!'s' new 48-page quarterly comic. "Anthologies always consist of fluffy stuff that doesn't impact on the characters in their main books. Ours is going to be filled with meaty stories, and it will depict the next step in each character's evolution."

The debut issue makes that clear, leading off with a 12-pager that reveals the next step in Lady Death's career. A second feature will show where Purgatori is going after her last run-in with Ms. Death. "It's pretty crucial that Lady Death fans read this issue, because it forms the introduction to what Lady Death's future is all about," Pulido stresses. Each issue during the book's first year will feature either an Evil Ernie or Lady Death adventure, along with tales starring some of the company's other popular characters. "Everything is going to be character-driven and crucial to the myths within the various worlds."

Pulido will be writing three-fourths of each issue during the first year, while he sets up the introductory reference guide *The Chaos! Bible* due in October. Then he'll fling open the doors to other creators. "In typical Chaos! style, we're going after the wildest people you can think of." Each issue also features a fully painted cover, with Julie Bell leading off and Joe Jusko following on #2.

—CS

SPIDER-MAN/BATMAN

Writer: J.M. DeMatteis
Artists: Mark Bagley & Mark Farmer
Release Date: September 5
Cover Price: $5.95

MARVEL/DC COMICS Hey, cool. For absolutely no hype, this latecomer sure got our attention pretty quick. And readers should note that this story takes place prior to the Clone wars, so it's Peter Parker as the Amazing Spider-Man swinging on the end of that webline!

Good thing, too, because our heroes have to go toe-to-toe with Carnage and The Joker. It seems some scientist types have created a thingamajig that alters the brain patterns of psychotic criminals, and they need to test it out. So why not start with the two most psycho guys in comics? Naturally, the alterations don't last too long, and our heroes have to corral these crazies pronto.

That's easier said than done, since these villains didn't get to the top of the insane list on the strength of their good looks. "The book explores the deepest fears that make these two heroes tick and how Joker and Carnage can play on those fears to get the upper hand against them," says Spider-Man Editor-in-Chief Bob Budiansky. "J.M. DeMatteis really delves into the core of their personalities. The artwork looks great too," he notes. "In my unbiased opinion, this is a beautiful book."

—CS

UNDERWORLD UNLEASHED #1 (OF 3)

Writer: Mark Waid
Artists: Howard Porter & Dan Green
Release Date: September 5
Cover Price: $2.95

DC COMICS We gave you the scoop on this mini-series back in June's Wizard News section. That said, you know that the plot involves a spooky guy named Neron souping up the superpowers on more than two dozen second-rate baddies and letting them take a whack at DC's first-rate heroes. When those good guys are worn down, Neron offers them a bargain to boost their powers too.

What we didn't tell you is who the key players are, beyond Neron's inner council of Lex Luthor, The Joker, Dr. Polaris, Circe and Abra Kadabra. Some of the second-raters moving on up to the front row will be Copperhead, Cheetah, The Psycho-Pirate, Star Sapphire, The Shadow Thief, Mr. Freeze, Spellbinder, Helligrammite and Chronos, says writer Mark Waid. Once these evildoers are buffed up, they'll appear in many of DC's regular titles this month.

Waid also let slip that four heroes—Blue Devil, Hawkman, Vril Dox and Spectre—give some heavy consideration to Neron's bargain. The Spectre in fact makes a deal—but Waid wouldn't say more.

The book also takes advantage of a fifth-color fluorescent green on the interior pages as Neron's signature color. "We played with printing technologies to make this book stand out," Waid says. "It's going be glitzy, glossy and pretty sharp."

—CS

THE BATMAN & ROBIN ADVENTURES #1

Writer: Paul Dini
Artists: Ty Templeton & Rick Burchett
Release Date: September 26
Cover Price: $1.75

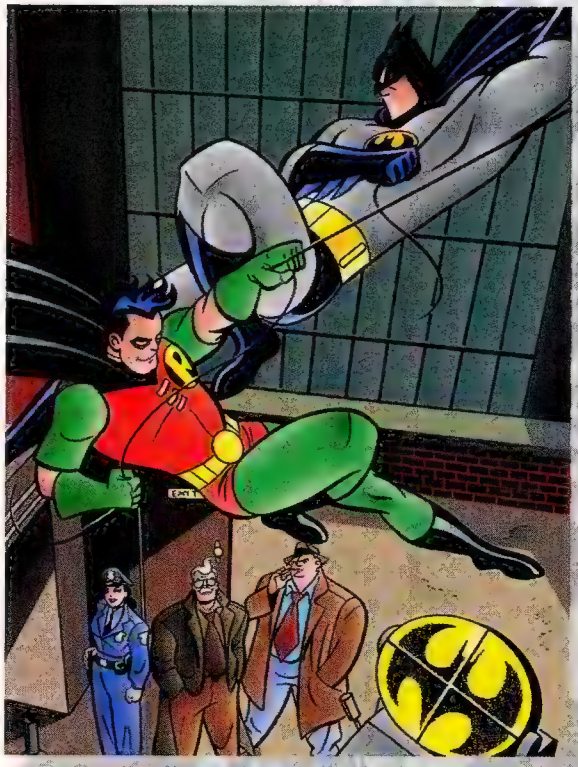
DC COMICS So do we really need a new name and #1 issue just because *The Batman Adventures* gets a new creative team? "*The Batman & Robin Adventures* will definitely have a different approach and style to it," says editor Scott Peterson. "It will be closer in feel and more faithful to the animated series."

In part, that's because the series tone will be set by Paul Dini, producer of many of the animated *Batman* shows that provided the catalyst for these titles. To lure Dini onto the book's creative team, Peterson convinced him to write the first three issues and then handle between two and six issues per year, as time permits. He'll basically serve as the Permanent Guest Writer, along with sometime *Batman Adventures* writer/artist Ty Templeton, who'll also be penciling every issue.

"Ty has the characters down so cold," Peterson says of Templeton's writing. "He's the only person I've seen who can hang with [*Batman Adventures* writer] Kelley Puckett and Paul Dini for capturing the spirit. So many writers think they can do it, but it's not easy."

Dini's first effort is a two-parter featuring Two-Face. "It's an amazing concept that Paul's wanted to do for more than two years," says Peterson. "We think of it as 'Batman and Robin do *Othello*.' It's really stunning. The Joker is so devious and brilliant." (And, yes, he said, "The Joker.")

—CS



MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in September, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff.

AKIRA #35

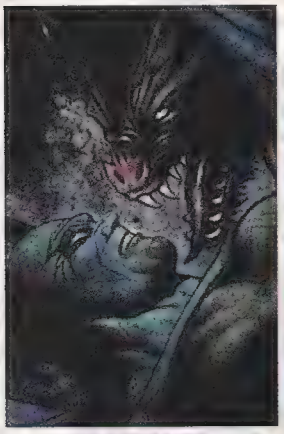
MARVEL "TETSUOOOOOOO! AIIIOOOOOOO!! WHAT THE HELL ARE WE SCREAMING FOR?" Well, the awesome *Akira* saga continues with plenty o' massive mutants, telekinetics, explosions and Silly Putty. This 64-page bookshelf edition leads right into the ultimate battle for neo-Tokyo. By Katsuhiro Otomo with Jo Duffy and Steve Oliff. For you mature-type freaks. **$6.95**

AQUAMAN #14

DC COMICS Seems like Aquaman's life has been one big disaster after another lately. Well, this issue ain't no different, as he goes up against a tougher-than-ever (thanks to *Underworld Unleashed*) Major Disaster who's bent on destroying Atlantis. By Peter David, Marty Egeland and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Start yer dark and brooding month off with *Batman* #524, where the Scarecrow goes in search of a brain (and ends up loading up on bran instead, which means he'll be out of action for a while). When he's done with that, he sets a pretty nasty and deadly trap for Batman in one o' dem fun houses. Then maze your way over to *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #44 for "The Secret of the Universe," Part 3 (of 3) continued from *Catwoman* #26. The Dark Knight calls in Catwoman and Catman for some major pest control—the Ratcatcher and even more rats than Willard himself could command are on the streets! Slink yer way down to *Detective Comics* #691, where the Caped Crusader meets the new "Underworlded" Spellbinder. This guy can now make some serious illusions with some pretty devastating results. (He once made it so alla Rob Liefeld's comic characters looked proportionate.) And hey, pick up *Nightwing* #3 (of 4), where Bruce Wayne's former ward (Y'know, I always thought it was more than just coincidence that Burt *Ward* played Robin...) gets caught in the middle of some powerful genetic cleansing in Kravia while hunting down more clues about his parents' murders. **$1.95 EACH; $2.25—*NIGHTWING***



BATMAN: MAN-BAT #2

CAPTAIN AMERICA #445

CYBERFORCE #16

DAWN #2

BATMAN: MAN-BAT #2 (OF 3)

DC COMICS Y'know, one o' the more interesting little tidbits about this Elseworlds tale is the fact that Man-Bat has a hyphen in his name and Batman doesn't. That wacky English language. Anyway, Bats finds Langstrom's lair this issue and the fur begins to fly. Also, Francine Langstrom begins to lose her humanity and gain some freakish wings! By Jamie Delano and John Bolton. **$4.95**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #445

MARVEL "Operation: Rebirth," Part 1 (of 4). Wa-hoo!! No more CrapWolf! No more armor! Cap is back, baby! This issue sees Cap face a pretty wacked-out world! It looks like Sharon Carter's back among the living (She was Cap's main squeeze waaaay back when. And quite a babe as well!), and the Red Skull's got his grubby paws on one o' them Cosmic Cube doohickies! By Mark Waid, Ron Garney and Mike Sellars. As Waid patriotically puts it, "It's unlike any other Cosmic Cube story we've done. There's a mysterious benefactor who has brought Cap back to life, but not necessarily up to speed. And the mysterious benefactor has an agenda of his or her own that has to do with stopping the menace of the Cosmic Cube. This starts off a four-part story that will show Cap battling the one menace that he was absolutely born to fight and the greatest threat he's ever had to face." **$1.50**

CYBERFORCE #16

IMAGE This month you're in for a treat, kids! Nope, it's not Cyberdata and T.I.M.M.I.E. this time. We've got what seems to be a new storyline! Wahoo! Or at the very least, a break in the T.I.M.M.I.E. saga. You'll learn more about Ripclaw than you ever dreamed possible, including his jump from

MORE PICKS

mere paperboy to member of the evil organization Cyberdata to his current home of Cyberforce. By Marc Silvestri and Randy Queen. **$2.50**

DAWN #2 (OF 5)

SIRIUS Y'know, you could easily just spend hours gazing at the gorgeous artwork in this baby. But for those unstimulated few, here's the skinny: Dawn heads down to Hell to learn the truth behind Lucifer's Halo. Unfortunately, she and Darian get caught in the middle of an epic war between the eternal planes. Geez, sounds rough. By Joe Linsner. **$2.95**

ETERNAL WARRIOR #47-#48

ACCLAIM Your favorite immortal joins the fight for religious supremacy. But he kinda wusses out and instead of fighting, he becomes a prophet to show a fundamentalist religious government some rather modern ideas. Then in issue #48, he goes from prophet to...martyr. (Uh, don't you have to *die* to become a martyr? Oboy.) When Gilad gets a nasty heart wound, his immortal life may become much more mortal! By John Ostrander, Jackson Guice and Steve Montano. **$2.50 EACH**

FLASH #107

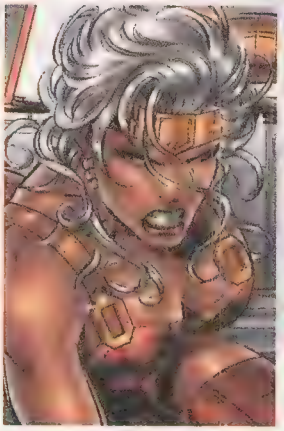
DC COMICS Holy Moley! It's lightning bolt/red costume team-up month as the Big Red Cheese (a.k.a. Captain Marvel) teams up with the Flash to stop the "Underworlded" Shadow Thief from engulfing a theme park. (Hey, if it's Great Adventure, the Flash and Cap'n Marvel can go on the Batman ride! Wheeee!) By Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez and Jose Marzan Jr. **$1.75**

GEN[13] #5

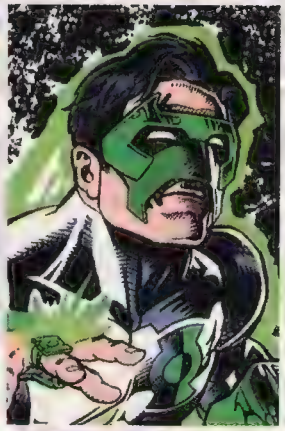
IMAGE This issue sees the babelicious debut of yet another hot Gen[13]er. Oh God. I don't think I can handle another hot character in this book...oh, wait, they're not real. They're NOT real. (Sorry, but my therapist says I have to keep repeating that little mantra.) Meanwhile, Rainmaker confronts a pretty big decision and the team finds an extremely personal mission waiting for them back in La Jolla. The story continues over in *Deathblow* #20. By Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner. **$2.50**

ETERNAL WARRIOR #48

GEN[13] #5



GLORY #6



GREEN LANTERN #68

GLORY #6

IMAGE Some undead, flaky-skinned, icky guy has got the hots for Glory (the price of bein' a babe, we guess...). Glory continues to fight through her enemies as you learn more about her connection with Brigade. By Jo Duffy and Mike Deodato Jr. And if yer just lookin' for some skin, check out *Glory & Friends Bikini Fest* #1 (an unannounced sequel to *Watchmen*, no doubt), which spotlights Image's finest females as portrayed by Mike Deodato Jr., Stephen Platt, Chap Yaep and more. **$2.50 EACH**

GREEN LANTERN #68

DC COMICS Looks like it's Green Lantern's turn to face some "Underworlded" freaks! The green guy bumps uglies with the funky new Mr. Freeze and some new villainous foe—that physically challenged chap Kyle helped back in issue #66. Just goes to show, you can't help nobody! By Ron Marz, Paul Pelletier and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.75**

ICON #31

MILESTONE/DC When Earth itself is put on trial, Icon finds himself with a surprise witness—Kato Kaelin! Oh yeah, Rocket also shows up. And the Galactic Coalition launches a surprise attack from a nasty species of hopeful conquerors. This specially priced Reader's Choice issue is by Dwayne McDuffie, M.D. Bright and Mike Gustovich, with a Howard Chaykin cover. **99 cents**

IMPULSE #8

DC COMICS Looks like that lame-o villain Blockbuster (Y'know, that villain guy who keeps putting small mom 'n' pop video stores outta business?) has been beefed up courtesy of that whole "Underworld" thing. And what's worse, he's puttin' the hit on Impulse! By Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

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MORE PICKS

MAGNUS: ROBOT FIGHTER #61-#62

ACCLAIM What the heck is going on with *Magnus*? This title wins the "Facelift of the Year" Award. It seems the Malevs are once again threatenin' the Earth, and they have Magnus in their nefarious hands! With nowhere to go, Magnus looks to the Psi-Lords for help. And in issue #62, with the Psi-Lords' headquarters in ruins around them, they have to make a decision that involves killing Torque! By Keith Giffen, Kevin Kobasic and Mike DeCarlo. Giffen retorts, "There's major developments in the lives of every single person on Earth, with the exception of the people on Gehenna and the island of Japan. Yes, there is a reason why they aren't involved in this whole thing. I'm building up to something that will really yank the rug out from under the readers' feet in issue #64. We are building up to the thing you least expected us to do. And *no*, we're not blowing up Earth or anything like that." **$2.50 EACH**

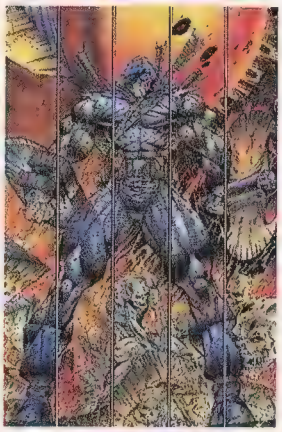
THE MASK #8

DARK HORSE "The Hunt for Green October," Part 3 (of 4). This time, it's Emily Tuttle's turn to try the mask on for size. She's the one who was always picked on at school by her so-called peers. So, you can bet your protractors that she's got her sights set on revenge! By Evan Dorkin and Peter Gross. **$2.50**

THE MAXX #19

IMAGE Out in the Outback, ol' Maxxy goes up against a big, nasty critter called a Hooley. By Bill Messner-Loebs and Sam Kieth. That wacky Kieth character has this to say about the issue: "There's this big monster that represents all the evil things of the Outback. Mr. Gone's spirit bubbles up and travels into the soul of this Hooley creature, which is chasing the Maxx. It should be as exciting as *The Maxx* ever gets. And at least people are getting a big chase, as opposed to a lot of people sitting around talking. There'll be plenty of talking in issue #20 to make up for this," he laughs. **$1.95**

ICON #31



PROPHET #2

PUNISHER #1

SPAWN #36

THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #9

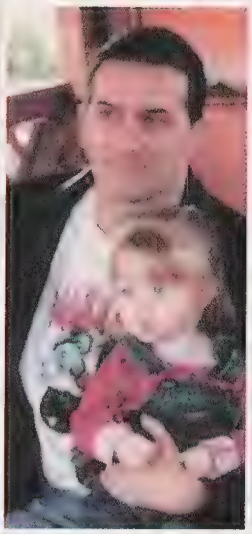
DC COMICS Hoo boy. Looks like Black Adam's back in Fawcett City. Y'know, he's that guy who killed Billy Batson's parents...and laughed while doin' it! Now he's trading blows with Blaze, and you better believe a certain Big Red Cheese is gonna join in on the fun. And while all that's goin' on, that ol' fogey wizard Shazam faints from the stress of fightin' alla that evil. By Jerry Ordway, Peter Krause and Mike Manley. **$1.75**

WHAT I'M READING

name: **Mike Allred**

occupation: **Writer/artist of *Madman Comics***
(Legend/Dark Horse Comics)

currently reads: "Fantagraphics' ***Love & Rockets***, because the Hernandez Brothers' work was the initial catalyst to inspire me to do my own work. Fantagraphics' ***Eightball***, because I always find Dan Clowes' unique look at the world fascinating and he's always experimenting with his style. Kitchen Sink's ***Black Hole*** I've picked up because I've been a long-time fan of Charles Burns' work and it's exciting that he now has his own title. And then ***The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot***, which is simply mind-blowing, as well as all of the other Legend titles—for obvious reasons."



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MORE PICKS

PROPHET #2

IMAGE "My life is a lie! You keeeeled my brother! My socks are too loose!" This Prophet character's just starting to cope with the fact that everything he's known about himself is a complete and utter lie. So he's got a whole buncha decisions and paths to make as he looks for his "daddy," Dr. Wells. Hey, if Prophet was smart he'd pick up a set of those Mega Memory tapes and remember everything in no time flat! By Chuck Dixon and Stephen Platt. **$2.50**

PUNISHER #1

MARVEL This shocking first issue of the new Punisher series starts off with some real sparks! Now that New York's got that death penalty thing, Frank Castle gets the honor of the best seat in the house—the electric chair! The Avengers, Bullseye and even Doc Samson join the party to witness the end of a menace! By John Ostrander, Tom Lyle and Chris Ivy. **$2.95**

PUNX #3 (OF 4)

ACCLAIM It's that time of the month again…to read the wackiest adventures of the Valiant Universe! The Bad Girls trend hits the PunX team, when they encounter a *really* bad babe named P.M.S. (Para-Military Shrew). And if you think we're going to put in a sick, uncalled-for, off-color joke here, you're bloody-well mistaken. By Keith Giffen and Claude St. Aubin. **$2.50**

ROBIN #22

DC COMICS "Ninja Camp," Part 2 (of 2). Robin swims across the lake to get to the other side of camp, where he bags like three or four chicks. Then, the little monkey wrench goes snoopin' around the Ninja Camp and gets caught by Dragoncat and a whole buncha killers. By Chuck Dixon, Mike Wieringo and Stan Woch. Dixon says, "Mostly, it's a wish fulfillment for anyone who's ever gone to summer camp. It's a chance to get back at your counselors. It features Robin in disguise and *lots* of ninjas. You can't have too many." **$1.95**

SANDMAN #72

DC COMICS "The Wake," Part 3 (of 3). [***Spoiler Warning: If you haven't finished reading "The Kindly Ones," which ended in #69, do so immediately.***] Anyway, while attending the Sandman's funeral, the rest of the Endless all meet Daniel, the new Lord of Dreams. (Hey—we told you to go finish "Kindly Ones" first!) Also, Matthew makes a big decision and Lyta faces the consequences of her actions. By Neil Gaiman and Michael Zulli. **$2.50**

THE SPECTRE #35

STAR WARS: DROIDS #5

STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI—THE SITH WAR #2

STAR WARS: X-WING—ROGUE SQUADRON #3

SPAWN #36

IMAGE By Simmons' Sphincter—this ish has more plotlines and deceptive thingamajigs goin' on than yer average Congressional meeting! When a familiar ol' face pops up in Spawnieland, Spawn confronts his ex-wife Wanda about a certain betrayal. (Hmmm…) Big changes lurk on the horizon. By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. And heck, while yer at it, check out *Spawn: Blood Feud* #4 (of 4), where Spawnie-guy finally confronts Heartless John the Vampire! **$1.95—*SPAWN*; $2.25—*SPAWN: BLOOD FEUD***

THE SPECTRE #35

DC COMICS It's yet another *Underworld* tie-in. When Corrigan turns down Neron's offer of supreme power, the wacky epitome of evil turns to the Spectre-force itself and offers it the freedom from Corrigan's soul. Sounds like a deal too good to be true. I smell trouble…or it could just be gas. By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake. **$2.25**

STAR WARS BOOKS

DARK HORSE Pick up *Star Wars: River of Chaos* #4 (of 4), where the war between good and evil continues. Ranulf faces the nail-biting decision of which side to choose: his Imperial allies or the love of his life, Leia, and her Rebel friends. Talk about your dates gone sour! When you're done with alla that mushy stuff, check out *Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue Squadron* #3. Tycho Celchu (gesundheit) has successfully infiltrated the Imperial Forces and can send his Rebel friends some vital strategic info (Yaaaay!!). But when he's pressured into leading an attack on his old Rogue Squadron teammates, Tycho's gotta make a pretty big decision! Next, snatch up *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi*—

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MORE PICKS

The Sith War #2 (of 6), where Ulic Qel-Droma uses the Force to open that li'l crotch plate on Darth Vader's armor, points to it and yells, "Hey, look everybody, Darth Vader's pee-pee!" Ulic's been using the Force for years, but now that he's tasted the Dark Side, he's havin' major trouble keeping his distance from it. And for some robot-lovin' fun, there's always *Star Wars: Droids* #5. Looks like Artoo's been infected with a computer virus (Artoo's got mono?), but Artoo's misfortune makes him a hero when he's compelled to protect a helpless-looking human. **$2.50 EACH; $2.95—*ROGUE SQUADRON***

STRAY BULLETS #6

EL CAPITÁN This ish, Sally Sweetheart goes to the circus and gets some cotton candy. Isn't that sweet? Oh, wait, we're talking about *Stray Bullets*, aren't we? Well then, life's lookin' pretty crappy for one Amy Racecar. She goes around killin' people, talkin' to God and robbin' banks, and then ultimately embarks on a mammoth quest (no, she's not looking for mammoths, silly) to find all of life's answers. By David Lapham. Ya better believe this is for you mature folks. **$2.95**

SUPERBOY #21

DC COMICS "Future Tense," Part 1 (of 3). Can you say *déjà vu*? The Legion of Super-Heroes head back to the late 20th century to save Valor's life, only to come face-to-face with Superboy. They can sure use Superboy's help, but that putz thinks the Legion's a buncha troublemakers. (Anybody else smell a fight?) By Karl Kesel, Tom Grummett and Doug Hazlewood. **$1.95**

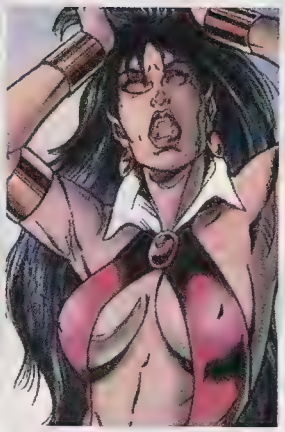
SUPERMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Yer high-flyin' Kryptonian month starts off a little sickly in *Action Comics* #715, when the Parasite (who's been driven insane courtesy of Luthor's wacko experiments) takes on Supes and drains the big guy of his powers! And now that he's got no powers, the Big "S" does his best O.J. impersonation in "The Trial of Superman," which begins in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #50. While Supes is blamed for Krypton's destruction and taken into custody by some intergalactic freaks, Alpha Centurion

SUPERBOY #21

SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL #50

UNCANNY X-MEN #326



VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #18

(Remember him from the *Zero Hour* days?) pops up on Earth and begins puttin' the moves on Lois! *Superman* #106 sees the Man of Steel face a guilty verdict! While waiting for his sentence, Supes is thrown into an interstellar prison that's chock full o' the galaxy's biggest, most bad-assed criminals. But fear not, prison lovers, for *Adventures of Superman* #529 features the escape of a number of criminals, including a certain Kryptonian who just happens to be chained to the rest o' the gang. And back on Earth, Superboy & Co. prepare to head off in search of Supes. **$1.95—EACH; $2.95—*SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL***

VENGEANCE OF VAMPIRELLA #18

HARRIS COMICS "The Mystery Walk" continues! Vampi's true origin tale hits its apex this month when Magdalene seduces Danser Porter to do her evil bidding. So, it's up to Vampi & Co. to put an end to Magdalene and the Black Seraphim. By Tom Sniegoski, David Perrin and Sage Crawford. **$2.95**

WONDER WOMAN #103

DC COMICS If you were wonderin' what happened to all those Greek gods (like Ares, Hermes, Athena, Hulk Hogan, etc.), what would ya do? Why, you'd tear Themyscira apart lookin' for an answer! And that's just what Darkseid and his shock troops do, leaving Wonder Woman and alla them Amazon babes to fight for their lives and protect their li'l island too. By John Byrne. **$1.95**

X-MEN BOOKS

MARVEL According to our latest and most efficient *Wizard* poll, it seems that some 86 trillion people read the X-books on a regular basis. Well then, I guess you'll all wanna know this: *Uncanny X-Men* #326 sees Gambit deal with his major loss from last issue, so he turns his Cajun eyes to Storm. And just what's going on with Sabretooth? One minute he's digging for bones in the mansion's backyard, the next he's lifting his leg at the nearest fire hydrant. And *X-Men* #46 features the return of the X-Babies! Hoo hah! Unfortunately, they ain't as cute as they used to be. Guess that's what happens once you're potty-trained. **$1.95 EACH** W

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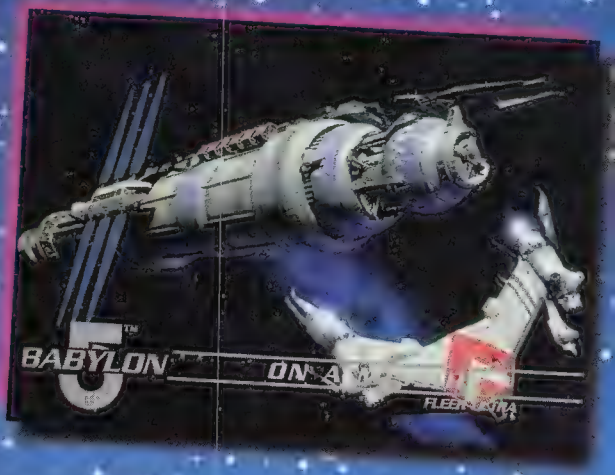

THE ULTRA X-MEN ARE COMING AGAIN.

FLEER

The Ultra X-Men card set—one of Fleer's most popular sets in the past two years—returns this September with the first all-chromium card set penciled by the whole Kubert family: father Joe and sons Adam and Andy.

The 100-card set includes a basic set and two subsets. The basic set features the most popular heroes and villains from the animated show and the comic books. Card backs contain information about the characters' origins and powers, recent comic book storylines and roles played by the characters in the animated series.

The Wolverine Timeline subset recounts major events in the X-Man's life, while in the Haunted Mansion subset, Professor X throws a Halloween Costume Party showing all the X-Men in a variety of outfits.

Chase cards include a gold signature series (one in every pack), embossed cards celebrating the "Age of Apocalypse" storyline (one in every other pack) and HoloFlash cards spotlighting nine of the most dangerous X-Men and their means of destruction on etched holographic foil (approximately one in every six packs).

Based on the past success of the Ultra X-Men card sets and the combination of the Kubert family, Fleer's Steve Domzalski says that the Fleer Ultra X-Men set could be the most popular card set in history.

"X-Men is Marvel's biggest seller and it's certainly been our biggest seller," added Domzalski. "We expect this set to be the culmination of all the X-Men sets out there. There's been an industry trend to do chromium sets. Chromium has been the most coveted of chase cards and now the complete set is chromium. They just look so vibrant."

Adam and Andy Kubert have made their name penciling the *X-Men* while father Joe—founder of the Kubert School of Art in New Jersey—had classic runs on *Sergeant Rock* and *Tarzan*.

Suggested retail price for an eight-card pack is $2.89.

In other Fleer news:

•The *Babylon 5* set, inspired by the Warner Bros. television series, debuts Sept. 6. The 120-card set includes actual photos from the TV show, with regular cards featuring foil-stamping and UV coating.

Each eight-card pack carries a suggested retail price of $1.49.

Six subsets include pilot and episodes (45 cards), characters (23 cards), warships (10 cards), major events (10 cards), Babylon station (10 cards) and trivia (10 cards).

Chase cards include the eight-card Space Gallery set (approximately one in four packs), eight Prismatic Foil luminescent cards of the *Babylon 5* starships (approx. one in four packs) and eight 3-D hologram cards (approx. one in eight packs).

• In time for the holiday season, Fleer will release a card set recounting cherished stories of Christmas.

Such classic tales as "The Nutcracker," "'Twas the Night Before Christmas," "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and "A Christmas Carol" will be featured.

Each seven-card pack carries a suggested retail price of 79 cents.

SKYBOX

The Disney Premium Collector Cards set spotlights artwork from classic Disney characters as well as archival art.

The 80-card series consists of 65 char-

Fleer's all-chromium Ultra X-Men set features dastardly villains...

...and heroic do-gooders, all penciled by the Kubert clan!

Want more freaks? Check out the *Babylon 5* set, another Fleer goodie.

acter cards featuring Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Donald Duck, Daisy Duck, Goofy, Pluto and more. Some more obscure characters like Peg Leg Pete, Clarabelle Cow and Horace Horsecollar will also be featured.

Each six-card pack has a suggested retail price of $2.99.

Subsets include Classic Movie Posters (seven cards) and Classic Comic Covers (six cards). Two levels of bonus cards consist of nine SilverScreen notorious villain cards (one in four packs) and two special foil-enhanced Holobossed cards featuring original Disney art (approx. one in 18 packs).

The Disney Premium Collector Card set continues SkyBox's relationship with Disney dating back to *The Lion King* Trading Cards, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* Trading Cards, *Gargoyles* Trading Cards and *Pocahontas* Trading Cards.

• *Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home* and the Free Willy cartoon are featured in a 90-card series due in September. The set includes 71 scenes from the film, 12 cards from the animated series and one card of Keiko, the real-life Orca whale that is seen in the film.

Each pack carries a suggested retail price of $1.29.

• Billy Nye the Science Guy Interactive Cards—SkyBox's first completely interactive card set—debuted in August.

The 90-card set showcases Nye, the star of the PBS TV show *Bill Nye the Science Guy*. Each eight-card pack has a suggested retail price of $1.19.

CORNERSTONE COMMUNICATIONS INC.

Shipping in time for Halloween, Cornerstone Communications Inc. presents Hammer Horror Trading Cards focusing on scary stars from some of Hammer's top films—including *Mary Shelly's Frankenstein*, *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, *The Mummy*, *The Werewolf* and more.

Also featured are the Hammer Harem, showing some of the gorgeous leading ladies of the Hammer titles including Raquel Welch, Suzanna Leigh, Ingrid Pitt, Ursala Andress and Susan Strasberg.

In November, Cornerstone will offer a set on the '60s pop group The Monkees. Cornerstone has previously put out card sets on *The Avengers*, *Doctor Who* and Monty Python.

Cards are our friends!

TOPPS

The Topps Stadium Club Football Series 1 will include a 15-card Nightmares insert set of the players that terrorize their opponents. Commentary is provided by Vampirella, Topps' original Bad Girl.

Cards are inserted at a rate of one per 24 packs. Each 13-card pack, shipping in August, has a suggested retail price of $2.50. **W**

All this spiffy information was hunted down by a weary Wizard staff that hasn't seen a pillow in weeks.

We didn't think the made chaps that small. Check out SkyBox's Disney Premium set.

Hey, neat big fish. Courtesy SkyBox and *Free Willy 2*.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

• All your favorite *Gen*[13] and *WildC.A.T.s* characters will be battling at your fingertips with the new ***WildStorms: The Expandable Super-Hero Card Game*** due in August. Expect the entire WildStorm Universe to be included, though certain rare cards will feature non-WildStorm heroes and villains (like Spawn and Groo). Jim Lee provides art, as well as the rest of the WildStorm gang. Also set for this fall from Image: Spawn and Youngblood expansions for Caliber Games' ***Powercardz***.

• Fans of Marvel's classic superstars will be psyched about the August release of Fleer's ***Marvel OverPower***. Pick up any of the six starter decks representing the Marvel Universe: Clobberin' Time (The Thing), Deadly Foes (Sabretooth), Heroes Assemble (Silver Surfer), Lethal Allies (Carnage), Mutants Unite (Gambit) and Sworn to Protect (Professor X); booster packs will contain lots of extra incentives, like Wolverine, Spider-Man and Magneto character cards.

• Based on the board game of the same name and the ***Doomtrooper*** card game, a ***Mutant Chronicles*** film is in the works. The rumor wish list has the lead roles going to Arnold Schwarzenegger, Shaquille O'Neal and Howie Long.

• For sports enthusiasts, the first collectible card game *ever* on sports, ***Gridiron***, will be available from Precedence for the start of this year's football season. The 400-card set focuses on a down-and-dirty fantasy football league.

• Even more stuff for August...the new, up-to-date, revised version of the ***Magic: The Gathering Pocket Players Guide*** with original Quinton Hoover cover art, multiplayer and tournament rules, plus lots of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)...***Umbra***, the first *Rage* expansion set with more Wyrm, Garou and Event cards, giving the game an even nastier edge...***The Crow*** **CCG** from Heartbreaker with never-before-seen shots from the 1994 movie...***Chrysalis: Borne of the Supernature*** from Comico (you know, *The Elementals*)...And ***Guardians***, the first game from FPG, with art from Keith Parkinson, Brom and Mike Ploog.

• The world of ***Magic: The Gathering*** just got more expensive come September. Prices are up. Starter decks will bear an $8.95 price tag (up a dollar), while boosters ring in at $2.95 (up 50 cents).

• Just around the bend, the new ***Star Wars*** **CCG** from Decipher (the makers of the *Star Trek* CCG) should be stirring up a healthy dose of anticipation. Its tentative release date is September or October, though hopefully they'll take their time and get it right. This game should be huge!

• Also look for excitement to mount, the closer we get to November's release of Iron Crown Enterprises' ***Middle-earth*** **CCG**. Based on Tolkien's famous *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, players take on the roll of one of the five wizards sent to Middle-earth to stop the evil Sauron. —*Michael Searle*

Michael Searle is the editor of Wizard's sister mag *InQuest*, the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.

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THE NEW AND IMPROVED WIZARD PRICE GUIDE

You'll notice some major improvements in the price guide this month, making it easier to use, more informative, more complete and lots better in all sorts of ways.

The first thing you'll notice is the amount of additional titles we now have in the price guide. We've added over 100 new titles, including some of the most exciting Golden Age and small press titles never before seen in a monthly price guide. We've added cross-references, so it's easy to see where your favorite character first appeared. We've added manga titles. We've added a grading guide, a pricing guide and a photo gallery of rare comics. All this new information, and we haven't even raised our cover price (well, except for this special anniversary issue). What a deal!

Golden Age comics, such as this first appearance of Superman (which sells for like a million dollars), are now listed in the guide.

Gold in More Ways than One

We've expanded all the ongoing DC titles back to their first issues, so you'll find prices for *Action Comics* #1 (first app. of Superman), *Detective Comics* #1, *Flash* #1, *Batman* #1, *Superman* #1 and so on. You'll also find listings for other major Golden Age titles like *Marvel Mystery Comics*, *Human Torch*, *Whiz Comics*, *Captain Marvel Adventures* and many more. Check it out—the prices on some of these Golden Age gems will boggle your mind! The Golden Age market is one of the hottest segments of the market, so shouldn't we bring you the latest prices on the world's most valuable comics?

by Jon Warren

Manga Magic

Another booming area of comics is manga (Japanese comics). It's high time manga got the credit it deserves, so we're on a mission. Now you need look no further than right here for the latest on the world of manga. Check out titles like *Battle Angel Alita* and *Ranma 1/2* to get the lowdown on this hot segment of the market.

Small is Good

Small press, that is. Some of the most innovative comics are currently being produced by small publishers, and now we're going to keep you posted on what's happening in this vital segment of the hobby. *Animal Mystic*, *Creed*, *Cry for Dawn*, *Eightball*, *From Hell*, *Hate* and *Hepcats* are just a few of the hot titles in this area. Small press means small print runs; some issues have print runs of 3,000 copies or less. And when the artist suddenly becomes highly acclaimed, as in the case with *Bone*'s Jeff Smith, the collector's market drives prices for first printings up. Luckily, for those who simply want to read them, nearly all of these rare small press titles are available in trade paperback form or as second or third printings. So collectors can have fun chasing original printings while readers can just enjoy a good read.

Cartoon Before the Comic

The Tick was a small press title with a cult following. That was before it hit the TV screen as part of FOX's Saturday morning cartoon lineup. Now, *Tick* back issues are selling for a pretty penny. Issue #2 moved up to $20 this month, and #3 and #4 jumped to $10 each. In fact, the whole darn series is hot. Given the small print runs and the fast-growing fan base, watch for these babies to keep moving upward.

Good things come in pairs. Check out one of the hottest new trends: #2 issues.

2 is Better than 1

We've noticed a new trend developing in some areas of the country: Some #2 issues are selling for as much or more than the #1. When you think about it, this isn't all that strange considering, in nearly all cases, far more #1s are printed than #2s. *Vengeance of Vampirella* #2 from Harris Comics sells for more than #1, *Angela* #2 from Image

sells for as much as #1 (and more in some areas), both *Ash* #1 and #2 bring $10 each and so on. We'll keep our eyes on this trend and see where it's headed.

In a Nutshell

• *X-Men Prime* (Marvel) jumped from $5.50 to $7.50 and was voted the #1 hottest book in this month's Top Ten survey.

• *Lady Death* (Chaos!) issues—and all the Bad Girl books—continue to be hot, with *LD* #1/2 Velvet moving up to $50 and #1/2 Gold moving up to $40.

• *X-Files* (Topps) is still smoking; #1 moved from $30 to $35 this month, while #2 moved from $12 to $15.

• Marvel's X-books, especially the "Age of Apocalypse" issues, are hot. *X-Man* #1, *Weapon X* #1 and *Generation Next* #1 are among the leaders in this area. "In current books, the X-books lead the pack, but I've seen a decline since the conclusion of 'The Age of Apocalypse,'" says Mike Diamond from Comic World in Moorestown, N.J.

• *Shi* is another super-hot Bad Girl title. Issue #1 moved from $25 to $30, while the #5A variant cover took a big jump from $10 to $20 on strong after-market demand.

• Image's *Gen*[13] (mini series) #1 and *Gen*[13] (regular series) #1 are still garnering lots of votes in our monthly Top Ten surveys. Prices are stable at current levels.

• *Azrael* #1 (DC) is in our Top Ten this month, as fans have finally warmed up to this excellent series. Issue #1 is currently bringing around $5 nationwide.

• *Spawn* #9 (Image), the first appearance of Angela, is a good pick for appreciation. With the current popularity of the Angela series, fans will certainly be looking to pick up her first appearance.

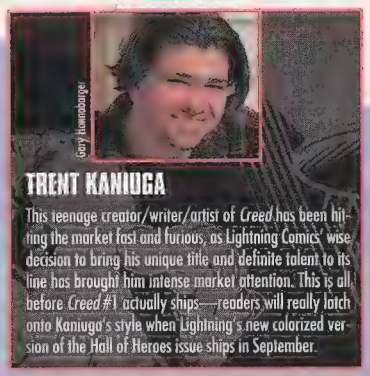
• *Cry For Dawn* (Cry for Dawn Productions) is strong at current price lev-

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

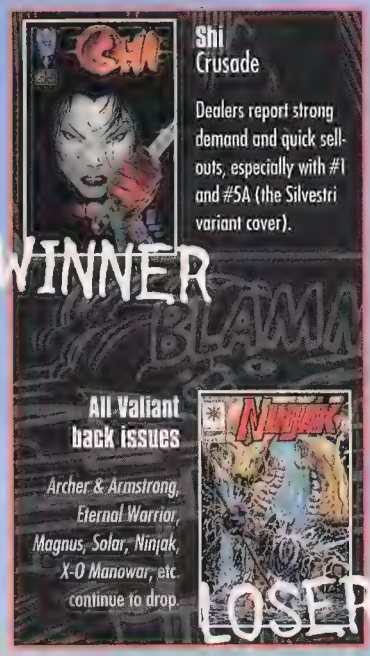
WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR



TRENT KANIUGA

This teenage creator/writer/artist of *Creed* has been hitting the market fast and furious, as Lightning Comics' wise decision to bring his unique title and definite talent to its line has brought him intense market attention. This is all before *Creed* #1 actually ships—readers will really latch onto Kaniuga's style when Lightning's new colorized version of the Hall of Heroes issue ships in September.

WIZARD'S WINNER AND LOSER OF THE MONTH



MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

Hey, everyone! Just saying *adiós*, 'cause I'm turning this column over to *Wizard*'s price guide guru Jon Warren.

Well, it's been fun helping and getting to know y'all. Good luck with collecting, keep sending in letters and thanks!

—Marc Wilkofsky
Goodbye and Godspeed

Dear Wizard,

Which comic is worth more: DC's first comic ever made or Marvel's first comic ever made? Thank you.

Mario Betti
Pinole, CA

Well, Mario, here's the rundown: Marvel's first comic was *Marvel Comics* #1 and rings in around $75,000 in Near Mint condition. DC's first comic ever was *New Fun Comics* #1 and rings in at $25,000 in NM condition (although I don't think a NM copy is known to exist). So, da winnah is Marvel! But if you asked which company published the world's most valuable comic, that'd be DC hands down (both *Action Comics* #1 and *Detective Comics* #27 are more valuable than any Marvel comic).

Dear Wizard,

I have a question that has been bugging me for a while. If I buy a comic, such as *Wolverine* #75, for $3.95 and it rises in value to $12, does this mean it is only worth $8.05, since I paid $3.95 for it?

Erik Monreal
San Antonio, TX

No, Erik, the comic book is worth $12, which means it's worth $8.05 MORE than you paid for it. If you sell it to your next door neighbor, sell it for $12.00 and pocket a tidy little profit of $8.05. That's American capitalism at work.

Dear Wizard,

How do you tell the difference between a Fine, Near Mint, Very Good, etc., comic, and how do you relate this to prices in the price guide?

Shellie Prescott
Trenton, MI

Glad you asked, Shellie. Check out our brand-new introductory page to this month's price guide. We describe the different grades and provide a chart for figuring the value based on the grade. For an even more detailed explanation of grading and evaluating comics, check out our upcoming *Wizard Annual Price Guide* due out in November.

Dear Market Watchers,

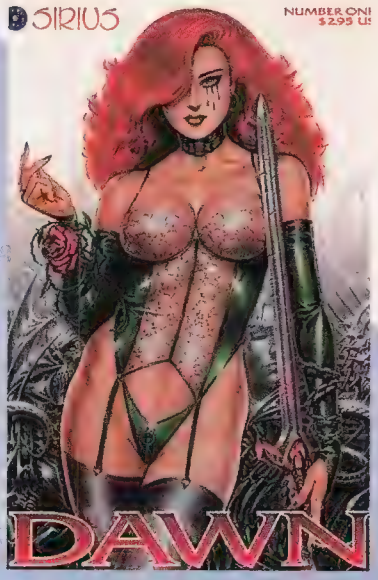
I have two comics and I can't figure out where to look them up. One is called *The Human Torch Goes Wild* #2 (it might just be *The Human Torch* #2). It dates back to 1974, and the cost was 25 cents. My second comic is *Marvel Spotlight* on Captain Marvel #1. It's from 1979, and was 40 cents. I just want to know if I'm sitting on a gold mine or a land mine. Thank you.

James D'Arienzo
Hazlet, NJ

It sure ain't a gold mine, James. Your Human Torch comic is *Human Torch* #2, which reprints *Strange Tales* #102. It's listed in the price guide for $4.50. Meanwhile, your *Marvel Spotlight* #1 is from the second series, which we list in the *Wizard Annual* but not the monthly price guide, and it's only worth a buck. Better luck next time.

els, and prices may be due to increase soon. Dealers report that they aren't able to restock, the books are just too scarce and they may have to start offering higher prices just to replenish their inventory.

• Valiant back issues continue to nose-dive. The market frenzy of '92 is now but a faded memory. Most Valiants are now at or below cover price. How much longer before the early issues won't go for more than cover price?



The Bad Girl trend marches on, and the sales on home bikini wax kits reach an all-time high.

• Also in the nose-dive department, comics with Marvel's Ghost Rider and Punisher have taken it on the chin pretty hard of late. Once in heavy demand, dealers report very little collector interest in these titles, even at heavily discounted prices. The good news is that fans who wish to read the early issues featuring these characters can now enjoy these lower prices.

• *Ghost* (Dark Horse) is an up-and-coming title. Popularity for this series is growing daily. Prices have been on the upswing nationwide, with #1 at $5.50 in this month's price guide, thanks to strong demand by fans who were late to catch on.

• *Animal Mystic*, by Sirius Entertainment, is a title that is new to this month's price guide. But it's not new to fans. Issue #1 and #2 are already up to $30, with demand outweighing supply. Keep watching.

• Trent Kaniuga's *Creed*, by Hall of Heroes, has been seeing a lot of collector interest of late. This is another of the new titles added to the price guide this month.

• *Optic Nerve*, the brainchild of Adrian Tomine, is one of the tops in the small press department. The first seven issues were mini-comics, with the rarest of these being issues #1-#5.

• *Double Impact* #1 and #2 are picking up steam. Another entry in the Bad Girl category, dealers are reporting strong demand. "Double Impact seems to be gaining fans; #1 is brisk at $7-$9, while the #2 nude edition is very sought after here," reports Robert Letscher from Key Comics in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Trent Kaniuga, whose name sounds like some Keebler product, is a creator to keep your eye on.

• With *The Maxx* (Image), Sam Kieth has another winner. The

The sudden surge in popularity in Maxx back issues is a testament to the power of T.V. or, more specifically, MTV.

title is among retailers' best back issue sellers, according to many of our VIPs, but prices are pretty stable due to a plentiful supply on the wholesale back issue market. This was once the case with *Spawn*, but those days are now gone. So, it may be sooner than you'd think before supplies of *Maxx* are gone too.

• *Zorro* #3 (Topps), the first appearance of Lady Rawhide, is bound to keep moving. With the new series bringing in new fans, all the early Lady Rawhide appearances are sure to be on the rise. **W**

Jon Warren is patiently waiting for someone to market a men's cologne that smells like Golden Age comics.

How do you make a hot character hotter? Give her her own series and about $3,000 worth of silicone.

Dear Wizard,

I was looking through my old comic books when I found *Action Comics* #1. I saw it was worth $125,000 in the *Wizard Annual*, and was wondering what I should do with it. Should I sell it or keep it? And who would buy it if I do choose to sell it?

David Lee
Silver Spring, MD

First thing you need to do is make sure you have an original, not a reprint. Over the years, *Action Comics* #1 has been reprinted numerous times, with some of the reprints being identical to the original except for dimensions. If your copy measures approximately 8-1/4 inches wide by 10-3/4 inches high, then you're in luck. The reprint that most commonly turns up measures 10 inches by 13 inches. (OK, assuming you don't have the reprint, explain how it is you found such a valuable comic in your "old comic books" without knowing you had it!)

Jeez...to sell it or keep it is up to you. If you decide to sell it, just about any of the advertisers in the *Wizard Annual* will be eager to take out a mortgage on their home to buy it from you, as would tons of collectors scattered around the U.S. Pick up the phone and start dialing, or attend a major comic book convention such as the San Diego Comic-Con. You'll be amazed at the commotion you stir up when word gets out that you have a book like that for sale!

Dear Wizard,

How much are *Marvel Spectacular* issues #10 and #12, in Near Mint condition, worth?

H. Benjamin Collins
Las Vegas, NV

You won't find these books listed in the monthly price guide because they aren't worth a whole lot, and hardly anyone wants them. We do list them in the *Wizard Annual* (where it is our goal to list every comic ever printed, no matter how inane) and they book out at a buck apiece.

Dear Wizard,

Last month, I picked up a copy of Marvel's *Bishop* #1. When I read it, I discovered that it has, instead of the full story, a repeating of the first and last eight pages in the middle of the book. Does this book have any special value due to an assembly error on the printer's part or is it about as valuable as mint editions of DC's *Checkmate* or *Arion*?

Darin Siegfried
Huntington Beach, VA

Keep your *Arions*; trash your copy of *Bishop* #1. Unlike stamps or coins, which are manufactured under rigid quality controls that make errors very rare, comic books are printed on printing presses that often misbind the four-page signatures that make up the book. Comics with extra signatures, missing signatures, reversed signatures and double covers are not rare but are, in fact, defective (except for the double cover which is kind of neat, but doesn't add any value). If a comic is missing pages due to a printing defect, it's not more valuable; it might even be worthless. Go pick up another copy, pop the top on that sucker and *read* it!

Dear Wizard,

My son's comic book collecting reminded me that my old comics were still in my mom's attic. I dug them out and discovered that, among others, I have an original *Amazing Spider-Man* #1. I saw in your price guide that the book is worth $15,500 in Near Mint condition. My copy is in rough shape, but it has its covers and all the pages, and no chunks are missing, so I figured it must have some value. When I took it to a local comics shop, the dealer told me that it's worthless, that comics don't sell for that kind of money and that only recent comics are in demand. Is he right? Is my *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 really worthless?

Samuel R. Tigue
Address Withheld

Worthless? Ahem. Sounds like a possible rip-off alert to me, Mr. Tigue. Too bad that you happened to find a less-than-honest (or less-than-*something*) retailer. Your *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 is indeed valuable; even a copy missing both covers but still complete will fetch over $100, and a complete copy with both covers and all pages should go for more than $1,000. This was apparently a case of *caveat emptor* in reverse.

This has been a cool first run at fielding your comic collecting questions; thanks for all the letters, and I'll see you next time around. ■ *Jon Warren*

Hey, Market Watchers! Send your letters to:

MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
e-mail address: JonRWarren@aol.com

TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of AUGUST. Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, using the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for August. Because some comic publishers, like Marvel, are on a six-week publishing cycle, this list represents a six-week cycle, and there might be two listings for the same title because of this (e.g., *Fantastic Four* #404 and #405).

1. **Uncanny X-Men #325 (Marvel)**
2. X-Men #45 (Marvel)
3. Wolverine #93 (Marvel)
4. Spawn #34 (Image)
5. Gen[13] #4 (Image)
6. Generation X #8 (Marvel)
7. Spawn: Blood Feud #2 (Image)
8. Wolverine/Gambit: Victims #2 (Marvel)
9. X-Man #8 (Marvel)
10. X-Force #46 (Marvel)
11. X-Men '95 (Marvel)
12. X-Men Unlimited #8 (Marvel)
13. X-Force #47 (Marvel)
14. Cyblade/Shi—The Battle for Ind's. (Image/Crusade)
15. X-Factor #115 (Marvel)
16. Cable #24 (Marvel)
17. Excalibur #90 (Marvel)
18. Spider-Man #63 (Marvel)
19. Sovereign Seven #3 (DC)
20. Spectacular Spider-Man #228 (Marvel)
21. Dawn #1 (Sirius)
22. Web of Spider-Man #129 (Marvel)
23. Amazing Spider-Man #406 (Marvel)
24. Spectacular Spider-Man #229 CE (Marvel)
25. Superman vs. Aliens #3 (Dark Horse/DC)
26. Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue Squadron #1 (D.H.)
27. WildC.A.T.s #22 (Image)
28. Superman #104 (DC)
29. WetWorks #9 (Image)
30. Action Comics #713 (DC)
31. Adventures of Superman #527 (DC)
32. Superman: The Man of Steel #48 (DC)
33. Batman #522 (DC)
34. Violator/Badrock #3 (Image)
35. Green Goblin #1 (Marvel)
36. Green Lantern #66 (DC)
37. Team One: WildC.A.T.s #1 (Image)
38. Venom: Sinner Take All #2 (Marvel)
39. Incredible Hulk #434 (Marvel)
40. Venom: Sinner Take All #3 (Marvel)
41. Sandman #71 (DC)
42. X-Men 2099 A.D. #25 CE (Marvel)
43. Shi—Senryaku #1 (Crusade)
44. Web of Spider-Man Super-S. Special #1 (Marvel)
45. Batman Annual #19 (DC)
46. Star Wars: River of Chaos #3 (Dark Horse)
47. Grifter #3 (Image)
48. Starjammers #1 (Marvel)
49. WildStorm Swimsuit Special #2 (Image)
50. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #75 (DC)
51. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #42 (DC)
52. Voodoo/Zealot: Skin Trade #1 (Image)
53. Detective Comics #689 (DC)
54. Robin #20 (DC)
55. X-Men 2099 Special #1 (Marvel)
56. Aliens vs. Predator: War #3 (Dark Horse)
57. Aliens/Predator: T.D.O.T. Species #12 (D. H.)
58. Cyberforce/C'name…Forces #1 (Image)
59. Wonder Woman #101 (DC)
60. Catwoman #24 (DC)
61. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #2 (Marvel)
62. Nightwing #1 (DC)
63. Glory #5 (Image)
64. Azrael #8 (DC)
65. Superboy #19 (DC)
66. Team One: StormWatch #1 (Image)
67. StormWatch #26 (Image)
68. Team 7—Objective: Hell #3 (Image)
69. Ballistic #1 (Image)
70. Adventures of Superman Annual #7 (DC)
71. Avengers #391 (Marvel)
72. Flash #105 (DC)
73. Operation Knightstrike #3 (Image)
74. Spider-Man: The Lost Years #3 (Marvel)
75. Vengeance of Vampirella #16 (Harris)
76. Aquaman #12 (DC)
77. Backlash #10 (Image)
78. Weapon Zero #T-Minus-2 (Image)
79. X-Files #7 (Topps)
80. Prophet Annual #1 (Image)
81. Fantastic Four #405 (Marvel)
82. Ghost #4 (Dark Horse)
83. Fantastic Four #404 (Marvel)
84. Savage Dragon #21 (Image)
85. Avengelyne #3 (Maximum Press)
86. Avengers/UltraForce #1 (Marvel/Malibu)
87. Batman/Judge Dredd: The Ultimate Riddle (DC)
88. Spartan: Warrior Spirit #1 (Image)
89. Avengers Unleashed #1 (Marvel)
90. Deathblow #18 (Image)
91. Double Edge: Omega (Marvel)
92. The Books of Magic #16 (DC)
93. The Mighty Thor #491 (Marvel)
94. Captain America #444 (Marvel)
95. Green Arrow #100 (DC)
96. Evil Ernie vs. The Superheroes (Chaos!)
97. New Warriors #63 (Marvel)
98. UltraForce/Avengers #1 (Malibu/Marvel)
99. Star Wars Galaxy Magazine #4 (Topps)
100. Spider-Man 2099 A.D. #36B (Marvel)

(CE=Collector's Edition)

AT THE TOP:

It's no surprise that the issues celebrating the 20th anniverary of the new/second generation X-Men came in at #1 and #2. Colossus' return to the team in *Uncanny X-Men* #325 and Rogue's major confrontation with Gambit in *X-Men* #45 caused retailers to load up on these $3.95 prismatic-foil-covered books.

NEAR THE TOP:

The X-heroes rule the day, having seven of the top 10 highest-ordered titles. Image sneaks in there with two of its wildly popular *Spawn* books and an installment of the just-as-hot *Gen[13]*. Unfortunately for DC Comics, its top-ordered book, Chris Claremont's *Sovereign Seven* #3, doesn't appear until spot #19. That's behind those three Image heavies and the first part of the strongly ordered Cyblade/Shi crossover, the biggest Bad Girl entry this month. The next biggest, by the way, is a welcome surprise: *Dawn* #1 from Sirius clocked in at #21, proving the Bad Girl trend still has legs.

IN THE MIDDLE:

With the absence of Mike Deodato Jr.'s pencils on Wonder Woman, orders on John Byrne's first *Wonder Woman* issue were solid, but not too terrific, placing it at #59. Retailers just didn't want to take an enormous risk on this one, even with Byrne's name all over it.

NEAR THE BOTTOM:

Orders on *X-Files* are coming back to reality, after massive over-ordering (i.e., speculation) during the past few months. Retailers who thought they struck gold with this megapopular series, and ordered tons with hopes of huge secondary market price increases, are being more careful now.

AT BOTTOM:

It's apparent that interest in Malibu's line of books has dropped slightly, looking at the orders on the *UltraForce/Avengers* double-crossover between Malibu and Marvel. The Marvel edition finished 12 notches ahead of Malibu's, thanks to the larger company's stronger clout with retailers and fans.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

Top 100 Coordinator
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: WizardTGTC@aol.com

9am-3:30pm, 5 free comic books to the first 100 people with paid admission! Plus posters and promo cards courtesy of major comic and card publishers. Over $1,000 in door prizes given away throughout the day, with 3 drawings every hour starting at 10am. Dealers from six states buying, selling and trading thousands of comics from the Golden Age to present day. Also on sale will be tons of non-sport cards, *Magic: The Gathering* and other gaming cards. Toys and figures, *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* merchandise, original artwork and videos will be in abundance too. Call for the current guest list. Contact: Derek Woywood of Collectors Comics @ 609-782-0817.

SEPTEMBER 17, PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Comic Book Convention, Sheraton at Station Square, 40 tables @ $60 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: To be announced. Contact: Great Eastern Conventions @ 908-788-6845.

TENNESSEE

SEPTEMBER 16, MORRISTOWN

Fall-Con Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn, Interstate 81 & Hwy 25E, exit #8, tables available @ $40 each, $1 admission, 9am-6pm. Door prizes, grand door prizes, comic trivia contest and comic auction, lots of dealers, thousands of comics, buy, sell or trade. Contact: Steve Riley @ 615-691-3302.

SEPTEMBER 30, KNOXVILLE

Fall-Con '95 Comic Book Show, Holiday Inn, I-75 north, Merchants Rd. @ Central Avenue Pike, tables available @ $40 each, $1 admission, 9am-6pm. Door prizes, grand door prizes, comic trivia contest and comic auction, lots of dealers, thousands of comics, buy, sell or trade. Contact: Steve Riley @ 615-691-3302.

OCTOBER 22, NASHVILLE

The Great Nashville Comic Book Show—Fall Edition, Ramada Inn @ I-40 and Briley Parkway (near the airport), 42 6-ft. tables @ $50 each, 2 for $90 and $40 for each additional, $2 admission, 9am-4pm. 1st 100 attendees receive gifts, hourly door prizes. The mid-South's finest dealers will be on hand with tens of thousands of the greatest comics from the 1930s to this week's releases, original comic art, comic and celebrity autographs, *Magic* and other gaming cards, non-sport cards, *Star Wars* and other action figures, as well as toys. Very special guests include: Joe Phillips (*Aliens: Colonial Marines*, *WildC.A.T.s Adventures*, *Timber Wolf*, *Mr. Miracle*, *Silver Surfer*, *Speed Racer*, *X-Men*, *Spawn* and WildStorm Trading Cards), Jim Hall (*Silver Surfer*, *Protectors*, *Aliens vs. Predator: War* and *Mecha Special*), Sam Payne (*Strangers* and *Judgment Day*) Chad Sergesketter (*Comrades of War* and *The Liquifier*), Bill Byrge (Star of *Ernest Saves Christmas*, *Ernest Scared Stupid* and others). Contact: Michael Bray @ 615-367-1405 or Mark Ballard @ 615-520-8788.

TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2, HOUSTON

Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn Northwest, 14996 N.W. Frwy. 290 at Beltway 8, 35 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

SEPTEMBER 9, SAN ANTONIO

Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, I-10 West at 410 West behind Malibu Fun Center, 40 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

SEPTEMBER 10 & 30, AUSTIN

Comic and Card Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 North I-H35, 40 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

SEPTEMBER 16, HOUSTON

L. King Collectibles, Monthly In-Store Sale-Bration Event! 3001 Fondren, free admission, 10am-6pm, over $750 in raffle prizes, receive one raffle prize for each $10 purchase, 200 prizes available! Raffle prizes include boxes of non-sport cards, *Magic* cards and comics. Check out our lowest everyday prices on comics, non-sports cards, *Magic* singles and packs, sports cards, and supplies! During our Sale-Bration Event, discover special values and discount prices throughout the store! Bring this ad and receive 1 free pack of comic cards and 5 free comics. We carry the hard-to-find, hot comics you have been looking for! Call 713-782-2273 for more information.

SEPTEMBER 17, HOUSTON

Comic and Card Convention, Marriott Westside, 13210 Katy Frwy., I-10 West exit Eldridge, 45 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

SEPTEMBER 23, HOUSTON

Comic and Card Convention, Hilton Southwest Hotel, 6780 S.W. Frwy., 59 South exit Hillcroft, 33 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

SEPTEMBER 24, SAN ANTONIO

Comic and Card Convention, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 and Wurzbach, 50 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

OCTOBER 1, HOUSTON

Comic and Card Convention, Holiday Inn Southwest, 11160 Southwest Frwy., 59 South at Beltway 8, 38 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, receive a free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

OCTOBER 1, HOUSTON

Comix Fair XIII (Houston's Oldest and Best Comic Convention), Harvey Hotel, 2712 Southwest Frwy. at Kirby, $4 admission, children under 12 $2, 10am-4pm. ***Magic: The Gathering* Tournament with prizes** (small fee to enter tournament—call for schedule and prize list). Special guests: Mike Benton (author of *The Comic Book in America*), Ben Dunn (publisher of Antarctic Press), meet the creators of Archangel from Eternal Comics...more guests to be announced. **Free autographs from artists, free portfolio examinations. 5 free comics** with paid admission (must bring this ad or a photocopy). Special gift for first 200 people to arrive! Dealers from across the Southwest attending! Call for dealer table information. **No-minimum comic book auction at 1:30pm. Special drawing at 1pm for $100 shopping spree!** Discount coupons available in Houston at Roy's Collectors Showcase, Third Planet, Legends Comics and Games, Phoenix Comics, Nan's Games and Comics Too! and Bedrock City Comics, or call 713-667-8697 for mail-order discount coupons and convention updates!

VIRGINIA

OCTOBER 8, TYSONS CORNER/FALLS CHURCH

Capital Associates' Tysons Corner Monthly, Tysons Corner Ramada (Double Tree Hotel), 7801 Leesburg Pike (Falls Church), take exit 10 off I-495 (Rt. 7 East), 85 tables @ $65 for the 1st table, $60 for the 2nd table, $55 for each additional table, $2 admission (may be higher for dates where autographs are added, children under 5 are free), 10am-4pm. Guests: Greg LaRocque, Dan Parsons, and more to be added—call for the latest in guest updates!!! Contact: Jeffrey Scott Rocen @ 800-222-2057.

If you'd like to use *Wizard's* magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

Conventions

E.G.O.*

BY TODD McFARLANE

Wizard: My Recollections

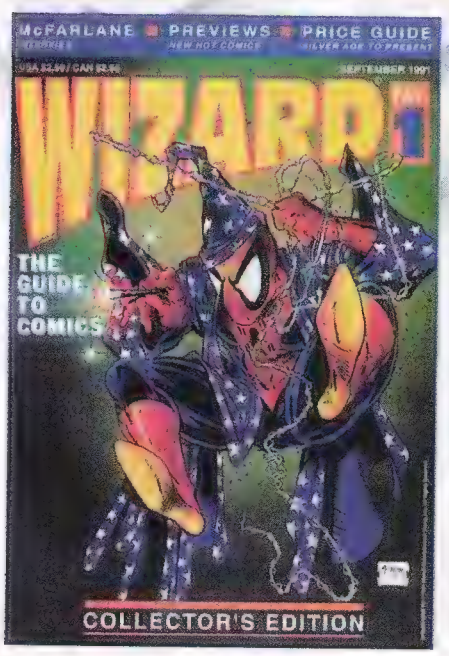
Well, here we are, already at *Wizard* #50. And since many pages in this issue take a historical look at the magazine, I figured I'd take a stab at it by looking at things from the beginning.

The Beginning

The first experience I had with Gareb Shamus and his family was when I met his dad Marty and his kid brother Stephen. It was at the San Diego Comic-Con around 1989. At the time, they were very much into sports cards, as was I. We got around to talking about the hobby, and Marty had mentioned that if I was ever in New York, we should swap some of his sports cards for some of my artwork. We left it at that.

About a year had passed before I had met Gareb, as he and Marty actually picked me up at the airport when I was en route to a New York convention to promote *Spider-Man*, the book I was then doing. After that, I did a signing at their New York store, The Wizard of Cards, and met the rest of the family (his mother Susan, and other brothers Kenny and Ilan). While I was doing the signing, Marty brought my beat-up leather portfolio case, unbeknownst to me, to a shoe repairman next door who patched up the thing and made it look brand new. I thought that was pretty nice of him.

My greatest experience with Gareb and his family happened directly after the signing.



The Grift

They wanted to buy some of my artwork and I wanted to buy some sports cards. This was when I realized that Gareb's family was a bunch of sharks. Now, I mean that lovingly because when this family sets out to do something, they'll do anything it takes to get it done. And we swapped artwork for rare sports cards. When it was all said and done, Gareb and his family owned (and still own) more of my artwork than anyone else. And, at the time, they owned the best work I had done up until that point. One piece they got, that in hindsight I regret losing, was the cover to *Spider-Man* #1. At the time, I thought I got a good deals. Now I can't believe I did it. Sigh. Then they took me out to supper at a nice Italian restaurant.

The Cover

As I was leaving that night, Gareb and his brothers told me that Marty's birthday was coming up soon and they were wondering if I could do a drawing for him. Now, in all my days as a pro, I've maybe done 10 drawings outside of my work pages because I don't have much time for it. But I felt they promoted *Spider-Man*, treated kids well at their shop and, most of all, treated me well. So it was my way of returning the favor.

I drew a pencil drawing of Spider-Man with a wizard's robe, cap and magic wand, wishing him Happy Birthday.

Time passed and they had told me they were starting up some comic book magazine during the summer of 1991. They asked me if they could use my birthday drawing as the cover of their first issue, and if I could ink it over to finish it. I was very flattered. I said sure because a) it was good p.r., and b) I wouldn't have to do much work. So that became the cover to *Wizard* #1, a variation of which appears on this issue's very cover.

So my cover to the first issue wasn't really a cover at all. But, hey, it worked and I'm glad it did.

The Goods

Before the Shamus family started *Wizard*, my first thought was that they could be dangerous. They are very focused. They get what they want. They don't take no for an answer. They try to do things differently. And it is that type of attitude when they started *Wizard* that explains why it is what it is.

Even though we have totally different styles, I admire their conviction to have a goal in life and implement it with no damage to anyone else. On some weird kind of level, *Wizard* is what it is because of that family unity.

So, congratulations to the Shamus family—I have to applaud them all on reaching 50 issues. Here's to 50 more.

Now if there's only some way I can screw them out of some cards, I might even the score... W

Todd McFarlane can be found every month in the pages of his comic, Spawn, published by Image Comics. He also likes orange Pez.

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff or Image Comics.

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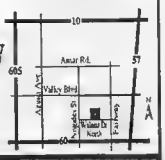

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CUT & PRINT

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood

Picture Tia Carrere portraying Shi (above). It might happen sooner than you think.

Tucci shopping around Shi

An announcement closing the deal on the long-rumored Shi movie may come as early as mid-August, according to the Asian Avenger's creator Bill Tucci. "I'll be coming out to San Diego for the con and then going up to Los Angeles to meet with some people," he said. "At that point, we might have a deal or maybe we won't. Who knows?"

Tucci, who claimed the talks with a particular studio and production company have reached the serious stage, would not comment on whether the public interest expressed by actress Tia Carrere (*True Lies*, *Wayne's World*) had actually flowered into a deal. But he did indicate that any deal for Shi would be on his terms. "I would script it and I might wind up with some kind of producing credit. In any event I would have a lot of say in casting and who directs. I do want this picture to be made the right way." As do the heroine's hordes of fans. ■ *Marc Shapiro*

Madman, the movie

A movie adaptation of Mike Allred's Dark Horse comic book *Madman Comics* is on the boards at Universal Studios for either a fall 1995 or spring '96 start. The film, budgeted in the $20-$30 million range, will give creator Allred the most control any comic book creator has ever had over a film adaptation of their work, according to Allred.

"I will be scripting, co-producing [with Ben Myron] and there's a good chance that I will be directing," said Allred, who had years of filmmaking experience—including a stint teaching filmmaking at the Air Force Academy—behind him before gravitating to comics. "And even if I don't direct, I will have a big say in who does. No creator has ever had this kind of control or freedom before."

Madman has been on the option fast-track since 1992, but it is only recently that Universal got serious and closed the deal. It's a bit early to announce casting, but Allred offered that the manic magic team of Penn and Teller have agreed in principle to play Mott and Dr. Boiffard, respectively.

"The film's story will be primarily the first three issues of the [Tundra] comic, plus some elements of the Dark Horse series," reported Allred. "The story will have its fast and sweet moments and some nice crackly action stuff that will send audiences reeling." ■ *MS*

Madman will be starring in his own snappy feature film!

CATWOMAN RETURNS

Attention, all you lovers of that sleek babe in the black rubber suit: Catwoman lives! Michelle Pfeiffer recently confirmed that she's ready to slip into that skintight costume and wreak havoc on the male psyche once again. "We're working on a Catwoman script right now, with [*Batman Returns* director] Tim Burton," she acknowledged. "We both feel that if we can get a script that we like, then we'll do it. Tim's company is working on it, so I really hope it does happen."

Pfeiffer especially wants it to happen, since she readily admits that the feline fatale is one of her all-time favorite film roles. "I loved doing Catwoman," she giggled, flashing her amazing gray eyes. "That was very liberating for me, to do that kind of movie, to not take myself so seriously and all." And that costume? Back in 1993, Pfeiffer wasn't so thrilled with it.

"The Catsuit was the worst thing I've ever had to wear," she said then. "It was a combination of everything. The boots were literally so high I would topple over; I would literally lean over on the front—I couldn't walk in them. And the suit I could only wear for about three hours because it would become vacuum-packed after a while. You know those vacuum-packed coffee things? It was like that. Initially, they hadn't given me any way to go to the bathroom. They worked that out, OK? But I was like, all of a sudden, they were shooting and I was saying 'How am I...?' Then the corset and the cap was too small initially and it was squeezing my face and cutting off my larynx and then the claws would get caught on everything that I would touch and then I'd have to get shined up and they would spray this silicone all over me and *then* the stage was refrigerated down to like 32 degrees."

But, hey, no problem. She's still willing to go through it all again—especially if she'll get that liberating feeling of cracking that whip again! ■ *Jenny Peters*

Christopher Reeve photo courtesy of Everett Collection.

COLUMBUS DISCOVERS FANTASTIC FOUR

Isn't it fantastic? Not really, if you're the guy trying to turn The Fantastic Four into a major feature film. That's what director Chris Columbus (*Home Alone*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*) has been trying to do for the last two years without much success. What has been the holdup? Chris just sighed and said, "For one thing, you need a good script. Many of these comic book movies just rely on the characters, which I don't think are enough." Columbus, who storyboards all his films and draws cartoons himself, said he got interested in the super-quartet as a boy. "I could sit in my room for hours reading all their adventures. That's why I optioned the movie. I've always been a big cartoon fanatic."

So this is a movie with built-in dilemmas. Among them, offered Columbus: "I think we need cooler costumes than *Batman*. I don't want [some characters] in *Fantastic Four* to be laughable." Columbus hopes to start shooting next year on *FF*, and he's also developing the comic Daredevil into a feature film. "Please, let me get done with Fantastic Four before you ask me anything about Daredevil," he said. Back to the drawing boards. ■ *Cindy Pearlman*

THE RACE FOR 'SPEED'

Director Richard Donner is going back to the source, the source that turned him into a big-budget director: comic books. When he created *Superman* for the movies in 1978, he paved the way for every live-action comic transformation that's been created since. Of course, with the success of his *Lethal Weapon* film series, Donner can write his own ticket in Hollywood.

So along with his wife, producer Lauren Shuler-Donner, he's headed back into classic comics, with plans for bringing both *Speed Racer* and *The X-Men* to your local movie house. "It's great," smiled Shuler-Donner. "We take the comic book, we bring it to life. *Speed Racer* is gonna be like a ride—'The Fastest Movie Ever Made!' But we haven't totally nailed down our casting yet. At all. Yes, Johnny Depp is our first choice, but we haven't made any final deals yet." Squelching recent rumors that Nicolas Cage will play Racer X, Shuler-Donner insisted that "we haven't even thought about who's Racer X, until we actually cast Speed Racer."

For the producer, it isn't the excitement of comics that has piqued her interest. "For me, it's just a new story. I haven't seen racing on the screen in a long, long time. Speed Racer has got a great story. He fulfills his destiny by racing and then resurrects the family name. There's a real dark element, which is Racer X and they finally join together at the end. So for me, it's pure story, and it's also visual. It can be really fun. And I think people will respond to it. It's not like *Batman* or *The X-Men*, which are true comics. It's interesting, because *Speed*

Speed Racer and Racer X are ready to enter the comic book movie race.

Racer only became a comic book a while after the TV series. It's really the cartoon that was immensely popular." That film is due to begin shooting in September.

Not to neglect fans of what Shuler-Donner calls "true comics," she and her husband also own the film rights to the X-Men. "We're doing *X-Men*, too, and that's truly a comic come to life," she explained. "The script is being written right now. It's not cast at all yet." In fact, she's open to suggestions. "Who do you think should be Wolverine? What about Gary Sinise?" ■ *JP*

Waiting around for a Green Hornet feature film? Its set for next summer.

MaxX-iMUm ReCOGNitiON

The Maxx, first an Image comic from the mind of Sam Kieth and then an animated series on MTV, has captured top honors at the Anise Animation Festival in Paris, France. Kieth, in characteristic diplomacy, said he was honored to win the award but looks at the prize as a group win. "*The Maxx* is a group of people making a cartoon show, not some guy sitting alone in his apartment. The cool thing is that everybody who is working on *The Maxx* is doing so because they care about it. I'd like to think that the care is what showed through with the judges."

In other Maxx news, MTV has greenlighted a second season encompassing six additional half-hour shows. "That's a big committment for MTV," acknowledged Kieth, who is currently cranking out *The Maxx* #18. "The way it stands now, issue #20 will become the entire second season." ■ *MS*

a Costly BAt-SUIT

A Minneapolis-based artist has filed a federal copyright infringement lawsuit against Warner Bros., saying the studio had used one of his works in *Batman Forever*. Warner Bros. has, so far, declined to comment on the suit, filed in Los Angeles in June.

Artist Andrew Leicester alleged that parts of the Gotham City backdrop for the movie were patterned after his large-scale sculpture "Zanja Madre," which stands outside a skyscraper in downtown Los Angeles. "Zanja Madre" consists of 12 tall marble spires arranged in a circle and topped with concentric rings and other unusual symbols. Leicester's suit contends the sculpture is depicted as a part of the Gotham City skyline, and that specific symbols from the work appear in other settings throughout the movie.

The suit asks for compensation ranging from $500 to $100,000 for "each act of infringement," which theoretically includes every film print struck as well as the alleged use of Leicester's work on T-shirts, posters, trailers and other promotional materials for *Batman Forever*, according to Leicester's attorney. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

'GREEN' DAY

Cameras will roll on the highly anticipated Green Hornet movie before Christmas, and it will be a Universal release for summer 1996, according to Dark Horse Executive Vice President of Entertainment Todd Moyer.

"We're going out to directors right now and will be making the movie before the end of the year," declared Moyer from the set of another Dark Horse comic film in progress, *Barb Wire*. "The next step is to start a rewrite [by script writer Rich Wilkes] and get this show on the road."

Moyer promised a reinvented Green Hornet mythos that "won't come across as a rip-off of Batman."

"We'll be playing up the whole East-West duality of Green Hornet and Kato. We've taken the Britt Reid character and turned him into a real hard-boiled type. He'll be balls to the wall; swinging across cables and shooting guns. Kato will be a much stronger character who will be well-versed in the mystical Chinese arts. Fireballs will fly out of his hands, and we'll have a scene where Kato runs across the tops of moving cars. The idea is to have a lot of fun with this."

Moyer reports that *Virus* is also on tap for a summer '96 release with a script written by Chuck Pfarrer and Richard Jeffries. The Dark Horse executive also indicated that "there's a possibility" that the second four-issue mini-series of *Species* could wind up being the sequel to the very successful sci-fi movie. ■ *MS*

hAre JORdAN?

From Air Jordan to Hare Jordan? This is the case for basketball megastar Michael Jordan, who has just signed with Warner Brothers films for his first feature, produced by Ivan Reitman (*Ghostbusters*). MJ will be part of a big-screen team, with his teammates including Bugs Bunny and all the Warner Brothers cartoon stars. "This is something that I'm doing for my kids," said Jordan. Even a year ago, Warner Brothers wasn't denying that MJ was going to make his feature debut with the studio. Early proof was Jordan's participation in the opening of a Warner Brothers store in New York. And Bugs has appeared with the athlete in various Nike commercials. Shooting is expected to begin later this year. Does this mean that Michael Jordan is now going to be a big movie star? "I'm just doing this one project," he said. "I'm not changing careers." ■ *CP*

LivE-aCtiON PiNOCCHiO

A live-action version of that timeless children's classic *Pinocchio* will begin shooting late this year for a '96 release by Savoy Pictures. Jonathan Taylor Thomas will portray Pinocchio, while Academy Award-winning actor Martin Landau (Ed Wood) has signed on for the role of the kindly Geppetto. Directing will be *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles/Coneheads* pilot Steven Barron. Handling what will most certainly be ambitious special effects work will be the famed Jim Henson effects house. ■ *MS* W

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JUNK DRAWER

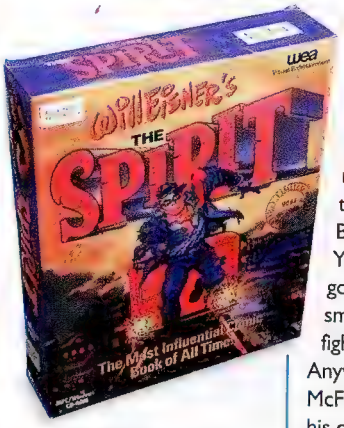
Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing

VACHSS' BAT

If you thought Bane was one tough villain for the Bat, you ain't seen nothing yet. *Batman: The Ultimate Evil* is a 224-page, $19.95 hardcover from Warner Books pitting Batman against an often overlooked section of humanity: child abusers and those who profit from the sexual exploitation of children. Some serious stuff, that definitely should not be overlooked. Its author, Andrew Vachss (*Down in the Zero*, *Hard Looks*), is also a practicing lawyer who represents children and youth exclusively. Look for *The Ultimate Evil* in bookstores near you this November. A softcover edition will be available sometime in late '96.

ULTRAFORCE FIGURES

This fall, you'll finally get to play with your very own UltraForce action figures. Hey, why not take a Prime figure and shove 'im into a heaping bowl of lime-green Jell-O? Mmm....Jell-O. Anyway, Malibu Comics, Galoob Toys and Heroes World are offering a special assortment package not available to retail stores. Each case will contain: 4 Primes, 2 Prototypes, 2 Night Mans, 1 Ghoul, 1 Topaz, 1 NM-E and 1 Hardcase figure. In addition, one of the figures in each case will be distributed as a limited edition direct market exclusive and isn't available *anywhere* but through the special direct market offer. Sorry, Malibu ain't spillin' the beans as to which figure it is.



COLLECTORS EDITION SPIRIT CD-ROM

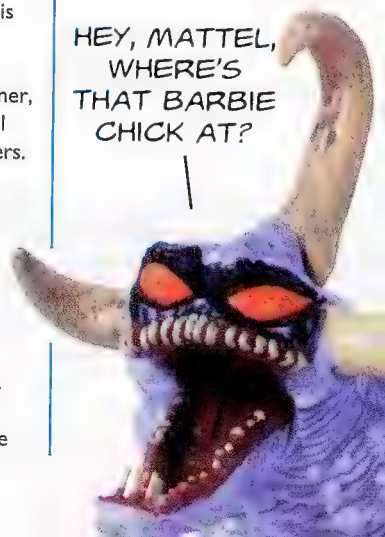
Byron Preiss Multimedia will be publishing a collectors edition of *Will Eisner's The Spirit* on CD-ROM. The CD-ROM, limited to 2,000 copies, will feature over fifty issues of the esteemed cartoonist's famed comic books, as well as a video interview with Will Eisner himself. Winners of this year's Eisner Awards each received a copy of the limited-edition disc at the San Diego Comic Con this past July. The specially numbered editions, distributed by Time Warner, are available for use on all Windows-based computers.

TODD TOYS CHANGES ITS NAME

Todd McFarlane's toy line, formerly known as Todd Toys, has changed its name to McFarlane Toys. The company, which puts out action figures based on the mega-popular *Spawn* comic, was notified by Mattel that they have a doll in their Barbie line called Todd. Yeah, we're sure kids are gonna confuse Barbie's smilin' pal with an evil-fightin' hellspawn. Sheesh. Anyway, to avoid confusion, McFarlane agreed to change his company's name to McFarlane Toys. (Wait'll Todd hears that McDonald's has a McFarlane burger...)

McFarlane Toys has made some changes to its already released figures. The Commando Spawn was released with three different guns. The first gun, with only about 700 released, is known as the "Polka Dot Gun," because of 10 to 12 large black dots on one side. After that, there were two shipments of guns that were gray with no black paint on them. The third version is the common gun with lots of little black speckles.

There appear to be about six different versions



of the Malebolgia, with the final version having a slightly purple-looking shade of skin.

In the WetWorks toy line, be on the lookout for the Werewolf figure. Due to his large size he won't be packed heavily in the assortment. In the Youngblood line, Troll will be the difficult one to find, due to the rocket sled he comes with. The allusive figures from the Spawn Deluxe Figures II assortment will be the New Violator and Vertebreaker. The initial release of these figures will be hard to find, but they'll later be shipped with new paint jobs.

The current packing and paint job variations will be as follows: Angela, who was extremely hard to find initially, will sport a new paint job and be the heaviest packed figure in the new case. Badrock will be the second most common and will be painted with red pants and no shirt. Pilot Spawn will take on a more astronaut look when he's repainted in a white and gold suit. Chapel's weapons will change and Commando Spawns' guns will be given a gold look. The Youngblood, WetWorks and Spawn Deluxe Figures II assortments will all be shipping in September.

As for those Toy Fair Spawn vehicles, here's the skinny: Both the Medieval Spawn Battle Horse and the Violator Chopper (which will be three times harder to find than Malebolgia) should be out now. Future Spawn is no longer considered due to the expense of producing it and may be out in September in a different form.

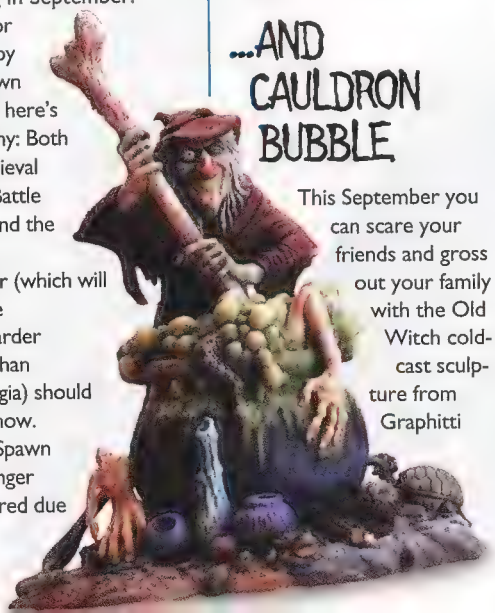
McFarlane Toys is already looking to its spring line, which actually ships a little after Christmas. Most of the figures from this line are not finalized yet, but fellow Image characters The Maxx and ShadowHawk will be joining the ranks. —*Sean Aune and staff reports*

A STATUE THAT WILL GROO ON YOU (GROAN)

Come December, you can take hold of yer very own Groo and Rufferto limited-edition, cold-cast statue from Graphitti Designs. Based on Sergio Aragonés' *Groo*, this statue, entitled "Cheese Dip?" is limited to 750 individually numbered pieces and retails for $175.

...AND CAULDRON BUBBLE

This September you can scare your friends and gross out your family with the Old Witch cold-cast sculpture from Graphitti Designs. Designed by William Stout and sculpted by Bowen Designs' John Dennet, The Old Witch measures some nine inches tall, is individually numbered from a 2,500 run and retails for a mere $229. But heck, it looks friggin' awesome!



INSTANT COMIC SUCCESS

Screw Marvel. Forget DC. The hell with Image. Well, all right, you should still get all those books, but you can now create your very own comic books right on your computer screen all thanks to Hearst New Media's *Comic Creator* on CD-ROM. You're given 18 superheroes and villains, a number of exotic sites, hundreds of action poses and a comic font to write your own dialogue. *Comic Creator* hits stores this fall with a suggested retail value of $39.95. Looks like self publishing just got dirt cheap!

STREAMLINE PICTURES MODELWORKS

Streamline Enterprises' model-making division (Yep, that's where Cindy Crawford, Naomi Campbell and Rachel Hunter come from) Streamline 3-D, is now officially named Streamline Pictures Modelworks. So adjust your rolodexes accordingly. The first three model kits released under the new name will be the *Robot Carnival* figures of Red Cape and Chicken Man ($99.95), the *Robot Carnival* figures of the Girl and robot-costumed Boy escaping from the Evil Robot ($99.95), and a Prince Goro figure from the *Mortal Kombat* game ($89.95).

fast food fights

Fast food chains across the U.S. are hopping on the superhero express, turning to comic characters to help promote and increase those billions and billions served.

Most of these cool comic toys have come and gone, but more than likely, you'll see them popping up at any given convention. Here's what the summer had to offer:

- McDonald's began with a Spider-Man promotion in May, followed by the Gotham Glassware Collection coinciding with *Batman Forever* in June, capped by a Mighty Morphin Power Rangers Happy Meal deal in July.
- Taco Bell has a pair of six-week promotions: a "specTICKular" cross promotion (July 24-Sept. 3) with the Fox Saturday morning animated series, "The Tick," and four different Kid's Meal premiums based on *The Mask*, which will be available later this year. The promotion coincides with *The Mask* animated series which debuts on CBS this fall.
- While Casper the friendly ghost celebrated his 40th birthday with a major-motion picture this summer, Pizza Hut chipped in with four collectible, glow-in-the-dark hand puppets.
- Hardee's/Roy Rogers turned to the comic world's hottest group, the X-Men, for a four-week promotion in June. Included were a Beast action figure on a Glider, X-Men tattoos, POGs, trading cards and two different sets of two mini-comics. Also created were four combination "X-Men and its enemies" figures on pedestal bases that fit together like a puzzle to make a "battlefield," at 99 cents each with a food purchase.

—*Steve Traiman*

more

JUNK DRAWER

BANDIT MAKES IT BIG

Now you can get yer grubby paws on a Bandit sculpture. Yep, that cute li'l doggie from the old *Johnny Quest* cartoons is now available. Thanks to an agreement between Graphitti Designs and The Shape of Things (who produced the piece under license from Turner Entertainment), this cold-cast sculpture is limited to 750 individually numbered pieces, stands some five inches tall, and retails for $89.95.

ANIME IS ON IT'S WAY (HEY!)

If you're a video dealer tired of sending your Japanimation fans away empty handed, things may just get a little easier. Orion Home Video is releasing a Streamline Pictures Anime Starter Pack. The Pack includes one copy of each of Streamline's 12 most-popular titles, including *Akira*, *Fist of the North Star* and *Vampire Hunter D*. Besides the videos, the kit will include a 12-pack counter display, 50 Video Comics key chains (that's a lotta keys!), two *Akira* T-Shirts, a promotional booklet offering key advice to retailers, and more.

INVISIBLE WOMAN SEES DOUBLE

There are two versions of the Fantastic Four's Invisible Woman and Human Torch. The original version of the Invisible Woman was a repainted Spider Woman figure from the Iron Man line and the original Human Torch was a repainted Silver Surfer figure from an earlier Marvel line. Both of these *original* versions are very rare, but the new versions are a bit more common and easier to find. The new Invisible Woman is totally transparent (that means you can see through her) and the second Human Torch is somewhat like the first, but in a different pose and with a 1995 copyright on the back of the card. —*Sean Aune*

A REAL SNAPPY TOWEL

If you're hittin' the beach this summer, be sure to pick up the Madman Beach Towel put out by Graphitti Designs. This 35- by 60-inch puppy, retailing for $29.95, sports a spiffy shot of Mike Allred's yo-yo tossin' hero. And hey, it's cotton!

PRINCESS LEIA ADDED TO LINE

Kenner has added Princess Leia to its new *Star Wars* line, which should be out now. This means the assortment now consists of Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, Stormtrooper, Darth Vader, Obi-Wan Kenobi, C-3PO, R2-D2, Chewbacca and, of course, Princess Leia. If they'd just add Boba Fett, they'd be set! —*Sean Aune*

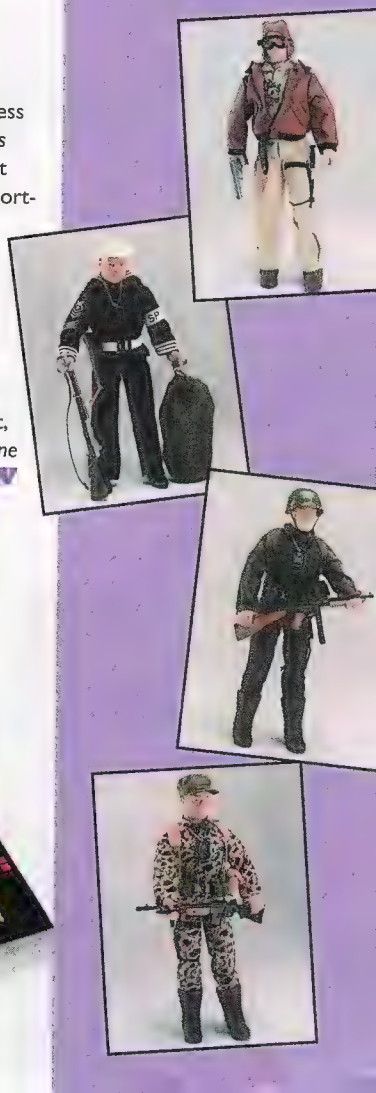
G.I. JOE: RIGHT ON TARGET

Hasbro, under its subsidiary of Kenner, is re four 12" G.I. Joe figures exclusively to Target ment stores this September. These four figur memorate the 50th anniversary of the end o War II and all four branches of the armed s

- The Air Force pilot comes with leather- helmet, goggles, bomber jacket, shirt, do pants, .45 caliber pistol with holster, a kni sheath and shoes.
- Navy Shore Patrol comes with hat, do shirt, neckerchief, belt, pistol with holster, shoes, rifle, duffel bag and a handbook.
- The Army's ready to storm the beac Normandy; each soldier has a helmet, h shirt, dog tags, grenades, canteen, Thompso Machine gun, pants, knife with sheath and
- Marines will also be in full force with hat, h shirt, pants, grenades, canteen, rifle, boots, knife with sheath.

Retail for these limited and numbered figu be $14.99. As of press time, though, the production number was not known.

—*Sean*



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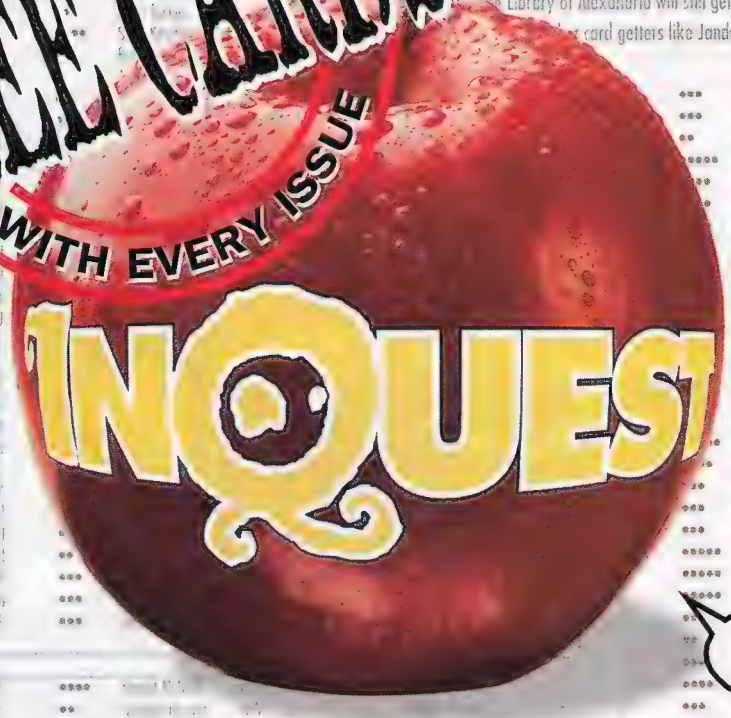

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bullpen

THE WINDY CITY

It was great seein' alla you *Wizard* fans at this year's Chicago Con. Apparently, you comic fans loooove trivia, 'cause there always seemed to be like 6,000 people on line ready to spin our fabled "Wheel of Doom." Those of you unfamiliar with the Wheel, it goes like this: you give us a category (anything from Spidey to floor tiles), and we give you a trivia question on that topic. If you get it right, you spin the wheel to see what cool prize you win (like limited-edition comics and cards, hats, T-shirts and other neat junk). If you botch the answer, you gotta take the physical challenge. Meaning you gotta do what we tell ya. From hopping up and down on one foot and yelling "Rub my head and taste my feet, Barbie comics sure am neat!" to pretending to be Spider-Man and web-slinging around the con, we made sure any fan who didn't know his or her stuff was made to look like an ass. And who says power corrupts?

JELLY GAUNTLET 2

Early last summer, Wizard Editor-in-Chief, InQuest Senior Art Director Robin Ramos and Art Assistant Dan Reilly decided to have at it and see who could lose the most weight. Dubbed the Jelly Gauntlet, the individual who lost the least amount of weight had to come into work and spend the full day dressed as a woman. (For you historians, Pat McCallum made one butt-ugly woman.)

Now, picking up where the first Jelly Gauntlers left off, Online Editor Buddy "amorpheus" Scalera (215 lbs.) and one of Wizard Press's Accountant-types Jeff "gelotinus" Petrick (253 lbs.) are set to go chins-to-chins, drop their Deluxe Fudge Grahms and see who can lose the most weight in the Jelly Gauntlet II!

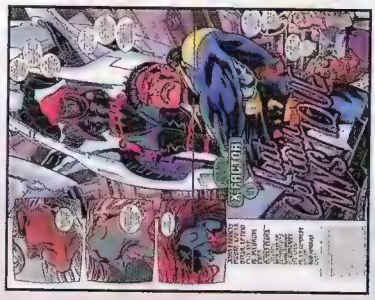
Why the sudden interest in losing their protective layers of fat? "I just stopped fitting into my pants!" exclaimed Buddy. That, and the fact that he's getting hitched to the lovely Janet Cosentino on October 15, and he wants to look good for the wedding.

Jeff cites the persistent nagging of his wife Ursula for the attempted slim-down, as well as the constant prodding from Wizard staffers to enter this contest. "I want to go down to my college fighting weight of 160, but my wife's already fitting me for a dress."

So who's the office favorite to win? Neither. We're hoping tro beef em both up to a combined weight of 700 lbs. and win the WWF tag-team championship. But either way, we'll have a shot of the loser in drag next ish.

WHAT ANNOYED US THIS MONTH

You're readin' the latest issue of whatever, when, for no discernible reason, the next two-page spread has to be turned on it's side to be read. C'mon, once in a while it's OK, but it seems every artist today feels obligated to give us one of these stupid sideways shots. Hey, why not save the twists for the story rather than for the physical pages? (And don't give us any lip for the Tick feature on page 34. We only do that once in awhile.)



STUFF THAT GOT US THROUGH THIS ISSUE

The excellent Toy Biz Galactus figure, Ritz bits cheese sandwiches, back issues of *Hepcats*, Dr. Pepper, Skinner's Roasted Sunflower Seeds, Jennifer Trynin's *Cockamamie* album, The Posies' album *Frosting on the Beater* and the photo of Cindy Crawford on the cover to August's *Esquire*.

Harry Peterson

CHECK LIST

InQuest #6

Beneath our **Tim Bradstreet** cyber-vampire cover, you'll travel to the world of gaming's future with this **Cyberpunk**-themed issue. We've got a preview of some cool real-life gadgets you'll be seeing in the 21st Century! Then journey into the mind of Mr. Bradstreet, and go behind-the-scenes at a **Virtual World BattleTech center!** Plus, *Magic* players will thrill to our spotlight on timing along with a "Simple Strategies" feature for beginners who want to learn **the *Magic* basics!** Includes a **free *Hyborian Gates* card** and an opportunity to win a trip to Wizards of the Coast! All for just...**$3.99**

CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to the grand prize winners of Wizard #46's contests a go-go. Enjoy the loot!

THONGS ARE GOOD!

Paul Milligan of Fort Worth, Texas will see his winning Lady Death swimsuit design (as depicted by Steven Hughes) see print in *Lady Death in Lingerie #1*, on sale this month!

Paul Milligan

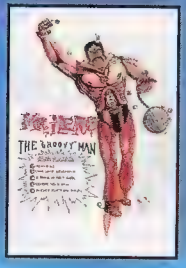
Steven Hughes

X-MEN FROM A TO Z!

Todd Neavin of Eagan, Minn. wins an original piece of Adam Kubert X-Men art and a complete set of "After Xavier" books signed by their creators. And all he had to do was name every single friggin' mutant in the X-collage!

GROOVE AMONG US

Matthew S. Furman of Clearfield, Utah, takes home an original cover sketch of Tekno•Comix's Mr. hero by artist Ted Slampyak, for designing a Groovy Mr. Hero complete with mood ring, lava lamp generator and combat disco ball.



TOP TEN

It's a first! After taking our fair-share of pot-shots at Marvel over the past fifty issues, we're handing the reighns of this month's Top Ten over to the Marvel Bullpen!

Top ten beefs Marvel Comics has with Wizard: The Guide to Comics

10. Like, duh, Marvel does books other than *X-Men* and *Spider-Man*.
9. *Wizard* nixed Marvel's Spider-Man/Wizard "Maximum Gareb" crossover proposal.
8. *Wizard*'s lack of coverage lead to the cancellation of *Terror, Inc.*
7. *Wizard*'s always so darn right!
6. Squirrel Girl not part of issue #48's "Babes" cover.
5. *Wizard* only comes out once a month.
4. *Wizard* knows upcoming Marvel storylines before Marvel does.
3. Todd McFarlane only gets one page to bash Marvel each month.
2. *Wizard* doesn't give poor Frank Miller enough opportunities to express his true feelings about Marvel.
1. Due to copyright laws, Marvel can never reveal that Gareb Shamus is the true Peter Parker.

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

1. B	6. B	11. A	18. C
2. C	7. C	12. B	17. A
3. A	8. A	13. B	18. A
4. C	9. D	14. A	19. B
5. C	10. B	15. D	20. D

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1. Q*berts
Wizard tracks down Kubert brothers Adam and Andy and gets the full skinny on how the pair broke into comics, how they snagged their coverted jobs as *X-Men* artists, what it was like growing up with a comic legend for a dad, and all kinds of other neat stuff.

2. Spoon!
Our Casting Call gets especially weird next month as we cast a live-action Tick movie. (Could anyone possibly have a chin that big?)

3. Ex-Men
The ultimate interview with ex-X-Men chronicler Chris Claremont. From his early days on comics, his tenure on Marvel's *X-Men* (along with what ended that relationship), to the creation of Sovereign Seven and everything in-between.

4. Avengers assemble!
Go poolside with the creative team behind the Avengers as Wizard travels to the scenic suburbs of New Jersey to eavesdrop on what big *other* changes are in store for Earth's mightest heroes.

Wizard #51
On sale in September

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

JOHN ROMITA SR.

John Romita Sr. gets more respect than you can shake a stick at. But around the Marvel Comics bullpen, the 65-year-old artist and Marvel Comics Art Director claims it's a different story. "They call me the old fart," chuckles the master of pencil and inks. "Actually, that's what I call myself. I do get the respect and affection from people and that's kind of nice."

But it goes much further for the man who has added his touch to almost every Marvel book going at one time or another. The word legendary is regularly parked in front of the John, but he admits it makes him a bit uncomfortable.

"I don't consider myself a legend as much as I consider myself a durable item," he offers modestly, looking back on his 46 years in the business. "I haven't really created anything really spectacular or something that's going to live after me. But I'm a professional. I'm versatile and can usually give an editor what he needs. I consider being called a pro a higher compliment."

By the time the Brooklyn-born Romita graduated from high school, he had a more highbrow illustrating career in mind. But an assignment ghosting some artwork for a Stan Lee-written crime comic for Marvel in the early '50s turned into a string of assignments that ultimately changed his world view. "I figured I'd get a few thousand dollars in the bank, get out of comics and be a magazine illustrator. But I never did and, as time went on, I got to like it."

Photo by Al Ortega

Romita went into the army where he plied his emerging talents on recruiting posters before returning to Lee, spilling the beans on his ghosting duties and landing superhero assignments—including his dream job on *Captain America*—during Lee's early attempts at getting a comic book empire going. Romita jumped to DC Comics during the mid-1950s and worked on its romance titles. "I survived those years by the skin of my teeth before going back to Marvel and jumping back into the superhero thing." And he jumped back on a wide variety of books including *Daredevil* and *Amazing Spider-Man*. "I like to think that I've taken other people's books and characters and made them more memorable than maybe they were before," says Romita with a flash of ego.

Romita finally admits that comic books have done right by him. "I've been in this for 46 years. I haven't gotten an ulcer and I haven't gotten sick of the business. For my money, it doesn't get much better than that."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...

Superman #1 (1939)

Favorite comic of all time...

Milton Caniff's "Terry and the Pirates." For me it was the greatest written comic strip of all time and I loved the artwork.

Favorite work of your own...

Amazing Spider-Man #108-#109. I co-plotted and did the artwork and I think a lot of my "Terry and the Pirates" influence came out in those books.

Superpower you would most want...

The power to time travel. I'd love to see all those great moments in history.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....

Glazed pecans

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...

As a kid I saved up for months to get a Gene Autry six-shooter which I broke in a week. As an adult it's my VCR.

Things you collect...

Old movies

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...

Tom Hanks

Favorite cartoons...

Bugs Bunny and all the old Warner Bros. stuff

Person you'd most like to work with...

Will Eisner

Favorite musical performer...

Harry Connick Jr.

Favorite TV show...

NYPD Blue

Last good movie you saw...

The Shawshank Redemption

Last good book you read...

Boy's Life by Robert R. McCammon

If you had the power of the Beyonder...

I would have taken over "Terry and the Pirates" when Milton Caniff went on to do "Steve Canyon." W

No secret is forever....

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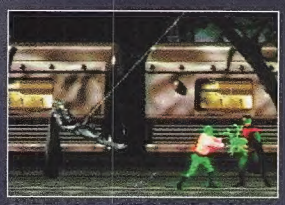

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